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## Thinking with Things: Reimagining the Object Lesson as a Feminist Pedagogical Device in the Humanities Classroom

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THINKING WITH THINGS: REIMAGINING THE OBJECT LESSON AS A FEMINIST  
PEDAGOGICAL DEVICE IN THE HUMANITIES CLASSROOM

by

Krista Grensavitch

A Dissertation Submitted in  
Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy  
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at

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

August 2019

## ABSTRACT

### THINKING WITH THINGS: REIMAGINING THE OBJECT LESSON AS A FEMINIST PEDAGOGICAL DEVICE IN THE HUMANITIES CLASSROOM

by  
Krista Grensavitch

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2019  
Under the Supervision of Professor Merry Wiesner-Hanks

In this dissertation, I continue nascent discussions of incorporating material culture in humanities classrooms in higher education. Primarily, this conversation stems from the material turn in the discipline of history, and in the humanities, more generally. It responds to calls that students in higher education must acquire the modes of thinking particular to practitioners within their discipline. My contribution sits at the intersection of material culture theory, feminist pedagogy, and the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), and is a work of feminist praxis.

I centralize my own teaching practice and draw extensively from my experiences developing curricula and facilitating spaces of teaching and learning. Knowing that the full breadth of the human experience cannot be understood from consulting written texts alone, I turn to material culture to address gaps and silences. This move, I contend, allows for teachers and learners to represent, highlight, and interrogate a broad range of identities. When rooted in material culture theory, it offers novel epistemological routes for exploring knowledge and meaning-making. My object-centered teaching and learning approach builds from an extant pedagogical form: the object lesson. In the nineteenth century, the object lesson emerged from the theoretical basis that knowledge is to be gained through sensation and reflection. Object lessons provide a scaffolded approach to learning through and with material objects. I have made

liberal use of the term and idea throughout this dissertation, as have other researchers and pedagogues.

By bringing practices of engaged pedagogy - that which seeks to create and maintain well-being within the classroom - to bear on object-centered teaching and learning, I make this a distinctively feminist endeavor. I address both *why* others should engage in similar practices and, through modeling and creating usable resources, *how* they could undertake such a pedagogical shift. I expand theoretical discussions on authority, identity, and unknowability and how they can be manifest in spaces of teaching and learning and the impact they can have on well-being. Thus, what is distinctive about my research is that I promote, not simply describe and analyze, a material turn in teaching and learning for a broad audience.

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## DEDICATION

I acknowledge that in Milwaukee we live and work on traditional Potawatomi, Ho-Chunk, and Menominee homelands along the southwest shores of Michigami, part of North America's largest system of freshwater lakes, where the Milwaukee, Menominee, and Kinnickinnic rivers meet and the people of Wisconsin's sovereign Anishinaabe, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Oneida, and Mohican nations remain present.

First and foremost, I thank the ants on my peony bush, those women who come before and whose work (often invisible, silenced, and denigrated) has allowed this bloom to flourish. Your tireless and steady labor supported me well before I was aware of the scope of work I would take on and in times when I thought completing this dissertation was an impossibility. You took on jobs and fulfilled roles you did not ask for. Though we do not often talk about it, it is fully possible that you did not live the life you wanted to; perhaps you abandoned plans for a different path, or maybe your situation constrained you so that you could not imagine what could be possible if you were given a choice or an opportunity. I cannot name most of you, but I know that your names include Anna, Cecelia, Mildred, Audrey, Phyllis, Theodora, Juanita, Carol, Mary Jean, Debbie, June, Erlene, Shannon, JoBeth, Laurie, Jane, Sherry, and Debi.

I thank my family – my parents Mary and Joe, and my brothers, Joe and Tyler – who model for me the value of staying curious, never being too old to play, that many hands make light work, that you leave things better than you found them, and that you never forget the corners when you sweep the floor. I struggle to find words enough to thank my partner Scott, whose unwavering humor, compassion, and support see me through. I love you all.

This dissertation is the product of collaboration. Though many of my collaborators are mentioned in the content that follows, it would be impossible to create an exhaustive list of those

who have supported me and my work. So, to every person who has shared insight, time, labor, and talents: I thank you. I commit myself to supporting others, in kind, so that your work can continue to know value.

My sincere thanks to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Merry Wiesner-Hanks, and the Chipstone Foundation – all who provided valuable resources and support, making it possible for me to research, write, and create this dissertation creatively and without compromise.

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## Chapter 1

### Thinking with Things: Introduction

This dissertation is a work of feminist praxis. It is meant to serve as a space for reflection: on my identity, my social locations,<sup>1</sup> my approaches to teaching and learning in higher education - and on how each of these facets square with available scholarship. Importantly, it is an opportunity to challenge conventions, including the form and structure of a typical dissertation as well as the possibilities for teaching and learning in a humanities classroom in higher education. I present this dissertation in a number of formats: in the written word, assignment sheets, and reflective and instructive videos. In each format, I hope to reach and impact a diverse audience of teachers and learners who, if they so choose, will use my suggestions in their own classroom spaces. I hope that what I offer will serve as a starting point for creating and maintaining well-being through and with objects in humanities classrooms in higher education.

I write this dissertation with equal training and footing in the disciplines of women's and gender studies (WGS) and history, and each comes to bear on my work in specific and enduring ways. First, informed by my work in women's and gender studies, I identify as a feminist pedagogue. For me, this means that engagement is at the heart of my approach to teaching and learning. I understand that my role in the classroom is to ensure that all members become active

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1. I identify as an able-bodied, cisgender, sapiosexual woman. I am white, a feminist, and a first-generation college student. While members of my family have had some access to higher education and have completed extensive vocational training themselves, I am the only person in my immediate family to receive a four-year degree. The relative stability of my economic and relationship statuses allows me the time and space to pursue advanced degrees and focus on my own education and teaching practice. I earned undergraduate degrees in both Classical Studies and Psychology, both from different institutions (Carthage College and North Park University, respectively); my master's level work was completed in Women's and Gender Studies (then, Women's Studies) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) and I completed my PhD coursework in the Department of History at the same institution. What appears to be a diverse course of study grounds me as an interdisciplinary scholar, teacher, and learner.

participants in learning: challenging, questioning, reflecting, and undertaking critical analysis. Along with my students, I engage to identify, and then seek to know my place within, the systems of power that privilege few and oppress and marginalize the greater majority in order to dismantle them.

Next, I continue my challenge to disciplinary conventions and employ what some might consider a rather loose definition or usage of the terms “history,” “history classroom” and “historian.” I build from the rather simple idea that history is a narrative (which may manifest in any variety of forms) that describes change over time. With this understanding, any number of disciplines, including women’s and gender studies, could be said to fall under the purview of history. Some institutions and individuals may think of the discipline of history as a discrete body, but in practice (and in my usage), the boundaries of history are quite porous. Therefore, I take a both/and approach here: history is both a discrete field of study and research *and* an inclusive approach to knowing and creating knowledge based on the paradigm of change over time.

Finally, building from my foundation in WGS and history, what I offer in the pages and resources to follow draws from material culture theory and is a contribution to the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). What is distinct about this dissertation is that I promote, not simply describe and analyze, a material turn in the teaching and learning in higher education: in history, WGS, and in the humanities, writ large.

### **A Starting Observation: Teaching and Learning in History and the Humanities**

Introductory-level history students, ones taking a course perhaps to fulfill a general education requirement, do not necessarily have a significant impulse to engage in primary source research and position themselves as historians. Much of students’ contact with teaching and

learning in history asks them to memorize names, dates, and events. Rarely are students asked to engage in the kind of critical inquiry we historians ask of ourselves. Even more rarely do students seek to engage in this kind of critical work and production themselves. However, in recent decades, scholars, teachers, and administrators have sought to address the gap that separates “knowing history” (which may be rather useful for passing a multiple-choice test or your local bar trivia league) and “doing history.” Knowing history supposes that students ingest requisite names and dates and regurgitate such information when the classroom authority deems necessary. Doing history work relies on refined abilities to investigate, synthesize, ask questions rooted in a critical or theoretical stance, and deliver conclusions in (hopefully) intelligible ways. Those of us who “do history” know intimately that the long, lonely hours in our offices are decidedly not spent memorizing the type of information that is typically asked of our students, especially in K-12 classrooms. And we recognize that we did not suddenly and without work make the leap to doing history, a task that requires disciplinary habits of mind: the tools of the trade that enable our work as historians.

Institutions and individuals within the history profession and beyond are beginning to pay more attention to how students acquire disciplinary habits of mind that will enable them to move from *knowing* to *doing*. Initiatives include the American Historical Association’s Tuning Project,<sup>2</sup> the formation of the specialized, scholarly sub-field the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) in History (HistorySOTL),<sup>3</sup> and ever-more-  
numerous articles and think pieces that address practices of teaching and learning in the higher

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2. See “Tuning the History Discipline in the United States,” American Historical Association, accessed May 16, 2019, <https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/tuning-the-history-discipline>.

3. See “Welcome,” History SOTL: The International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in History, accessed May 16, 2019, <http://www.indiana.edu/~histsotl/blog/>.

education history classroom.<sup>4</sup> As we exist in an academic world that increasingly calls for inter- or trans-disciplinary work, this is then a conversation that extends beyond the history classroom and into the humanities classroom. For example, *Exploring More Signature Pedagogies: Approaches to Teaching Disciplinary Habits of Mind* (published in 2012) offers chapters that discuss approaches to teaching and learning that ask students to do the work of disciplinary practitioners. The edited volume contains chapters that offer reflections and resources for teaching and learning in a broad range of contexts in higher education: the humanities, social and natural sciences, and interdisciplinary fields and programs (which includes a chapter about feminist pedagogy, a chapter I heavily lean on).<sup>5</sup> All of these examples point to the necessity of developing skills of critical inquiry, and they suggest a significant turn in how increasing numbers of instructors imagine their roles and responsibilities within the classroom.

As I'm reminded by Merry Wiesner-Hanks in the introduction to *A Concise History of the World*, history, itself, is a concept, an entity, marked by the development of writing. Traditionally, any narratives or accounts of the past before this all-important threshold are categorized as "prehistoric." Writing and capital-H "History" are inextricably linked.<sup>6</sup> It may come as no surprise, then, that most of the scholarship on teaching and learning in history

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4. Searching the online archives of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed* turns up numerous results that address teaching and learning in history, see Louis P. Masur, "Why History Matters," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 16, 2019, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Why-History-Matters/245484>; Elizabeth A. Leffeldt, "Why Study History," *Inside Higher Ed*, January 9, 2019, <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2019/01/09/making-study-history-relevant-today-opinion>.

5. *Exploring More Signature Pedagogies: Approaches to Teaching Disciplinary Habits of Mind*, eds. Regan Gurung, Nancy Chick, and Aeron Haynie (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2012); the editorial team published a first volume, *Exploring Signature Pedagogies: Approaches to Teaching Disciplinary Habits of Mind* in 2009.

6. Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *A Concise History of the World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 5.

focuses on skills related to texts, but, as I'll argue here, engagement with objects can also offer students of history a way to do the work of historians. With the so-called "material turn," history has (necessarily) drawn from archaeology, anthropology, and art history, fields that have established that knowledge gleaned through and with objects is valid and accurate, with the potential to challenge our text-based narratives. Despite historians' increasing recognition that material culture serves as a rich source for our practice of historical inquiry, literature that addresses both how and why to incorporate objects (as both a site of inquiry and a means of knowledge production) in our history classrooms is not well-established.

The term "material turn" describes how historians (and others within the humanities) realigned their methods and disciplinary outlook by acknowledging that a narrative of humans - their actions, interactions, and their cultures (what we call "history") - cannot be understood apart from their immersion in a material environment.<sup>7</sup> History's trend toward a serious consideration of objects has roots in Marxist dialectical materialism. According to Timothy LeCain, dialectical materialism lent the history, "the great insight...that human identities emerge from the way they interact with the material means of subsistence available at any point in time, including both raw materials and technologies. As humans change the tools and materials they work with, they also fundamentally change themselves."<sup>8</sup> This trend toward the material was also shaped the work of the Annales School. LeCain argues that the Annales School helped precipitate the move toward objects "with their argument that the *longue durée* material forces of

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7. Beginning more recently, historians offer critiques of the anthropocentrism within the discipline. The field of "Big History" is a reaction, in part, to this perceived anthropocentrism, see David Christian, *Origin Story: A Big History of Everything* (New York: Hachette, 2018).

8. Timothy LeCain, *The Matter of History: How Things Create the Past* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 44.

geography and climate shape the broad outlines of human history,<sup>9</sup> It was impacted by the rise of the “cultural turn” (and earlier “linguistic turn”) beginning in the 1980s. Marking a significant epistemological shift, historians and others began to question the methods (and efficacy of those methods) that dictate the creation of knowledge, thereby, “pushing historians to examine how their own methods of knowledge production had been and continued to be influenced by culturally rooted assumptions that reflected wider dynamics of power and control in society.”<sup>10</sup> In effect, the material turn in history, and in other disciplines in the humanities concerned with historical accounts, did not simply result in an “add-and-stir” incorporation of objects and material culture. It also called into question the practices and methods that allow historians to derive historical narratives from source material (whether written or material) in the first place.<sup>11</sup>

Since the material turn, historians have added to the research methods and theoretical standpoints available to those conducting object-based research, and made clear that doing the work of history involves considering objects. In their initial moves to incorporate objects, historians drew from other disciplines like art history, anthropology, and archaeology to assist in research. Increasingly, however historians have developed their own tools for incorporating objects as source material to produce historical accounts.<sup>12</sup>

These considerations of theory and methods have not extended to the classroom, however. If we instructors of the humanities are committed to utilizing our classrooms as laboratories for

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9. LeCain, *The Matter of History*, 46.

10. LeCain, *The Matter of History*, 55.

11. I provide a *very* abbreviated review here and acknowledge that I leave out significant writers and theories (including Bruno LaTour and Actor Network Theory). For a far more comprehensive discussion, see LeCain’s section “Marginalizing Matter” in *The Matter of History*, 38-63.

12. For an excellent example that clearly discusses methodology and in addition to providing a compelling historical narrative, see LeCain, *The Matter of History*.

investigation, creating not only history but also *historians*, then we must reassess how we seek to facilitate the development of historical thinking skills, including those involving objects. What I contend leads me to the question that directs my research: what are the possibilities of teaching and learning practices in a history (and, more broadly, in a humanities) classroom that ask students to both critically engage with and (sometimes) produce historical accounts through and with objects? To address this central question, we must consider both *why* we should pivot to object-based teaching and learning and also *how* this should and can play out. Each of these questions deserves attention.

To address the question of why, we need to first consider the current state of using primary sources in history teaching. Asking students of history to engage in primary source analysis in the classroom has become more common in recent years, even in introductory-level courses. In part, this is because this exercise is easy to implement. Textbooks routinely contain not just plates and illustrations that accompany the text, but also whole sections devoted to the presentation of primary source materials.<sup>13</sup> It is also easy to find primary source readers, even for many historical sub-disciplines.<sup>14</sup> What is notable in a review of these sourcebooks and readers is the distinct emphasis (if not complete reliance) on written source material. It is not *entirely* atypical to find visual sources included in these sections or readers, but these sources are often representations of two-dimensional objects: maps, photographs, and drawings. It is far less

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13. See Ellen Carol DuBois and Lynn Dumenil, *Through Women's Eyes: An American History with Documents*, 4th ed. (Boston, Massachusetts, Bedford/St. Martin's: 2015).

14. A quick search internet brings up primary sourcebooks that are organized by broadly and by chronology (Peter Stearns' *World History in Documents: A Comparative Reader*), but also by topic. For instance, readers that address food history (Albala, *The Food History Reader: Primary Sources*) or witchcraft (Breslaw, *Witches of the Atlantic World*) are widely and easily available.



common to find examples of three-dimensional material culture objects: clothing, food, or other ephemeral objects central to the goings-on of daily life, for example.

Many of the classroom exercises historians employ that ask students to conduct primary source research include a list of questions that prompt students to consider context. Following directions, students begin to identify and consider the implications of authorship, audience, time period, location, etc. Many a productive classroom conversation emerges from these exercises and it is here that we can help students to “think historically,” and investigate the “Five C’s of historical thinking:” change over time, context, causality, contingency, and complexity.<sup>15</sup> Such exercises go a long way in helping students learn to do history, but if we historians (and instructors of courses in the humanities) are truly seeking to use our classrooms as locations where students develop the skills we value as historians, then we must also include objects in the variety of source material we present in our classrooms. One reason for this is that since the material turn historians increasingly use objects, and if we are seeking to make historians out of our students they need to know how to as well.

Another reason is more philosophical and political. Most people’s (including many students’ and even some historians’) conception of history is that history involves that which is written down and recorded in the “annals of history,” what has been called the “tyranny of the text” phenomenon. But if we limit the aforementioned lines of questioning about change over time, context, causality, contingency, and complexity to written documents, we leave out important lines of questioning. By including objects, we can help students (and ourselves) begin to identify where critical gaps and silences emerge - what our sources *don’t* or *can’t* address.

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15. Thomas Andrews and Flannery Burke, “What Does It Mean to Think Historically?” *Perspectives* 45.1 (2007): 32-35.

This can help students to begin to recognize that not all names, dates, and events are represented in a way that accurately reflects reality in the “annals of history.” We can urge them to consider (and in many instances, consider ourselves) historically who has had the ability to write and what this slim portion of the population has deemed worthy enough to be written down. Charging ourselves to grapple with the implications of how the sources we turn to reveal, conceal, or even erase, we must use our relative power within the classroom and consider the ramifications of our pedagogical choices, leading us to consider another answer to the issue of *why*.

If we restrict the breadth of primary sources and continue to rely exclusively or even predominantly on written sources as our site for instruction of primary source research skills, critical gaps, silences, and omissions emerge. Primary source written documents are not all created by, for, and about the limited portion of the population that is man-identified, white, educated, wealthy, and generally in a position of relative social power. But the sources that are generally placed in front of students when we conduct classroom exercises are. For example, in the mid-2000’s, I enrolled in a course titled “Foundations of Western Thought: Ancient to Medieval,” an upper-level history course at the small liberal arts college I attended. Professors of classics and political science team-taught the course to a small group of students in a seminar-style classroom. Over the semester, in our interrogation of that which defines “western thought,” we students engaged in close and comparative readings of a small body of written texts, spanning from Homer’s *Iliad* to Augustine’s *Confessions*. What strikes me now about the exercise undertaken in this course (and the pedagogical decisions made) is the singular reliance on the written text in an effort to determine or point to something both as nebulous and as all-reaching as “western thought.” While I’m sure the course helped me to become a better, more analytical reader, it also assisted in the crystallization or reification of what I should consider valid and

authoritative as I investigated my intellectual heritage. Furthermore, it modeled for me that looking to written sources was all that was necessary for the kind of work serious historians (and academics in the humanities, in general) did. It took years of critical reading and reflection for me to first identify, then critique, and finally attempt to address through my own research and knowledge production, this written-andro-centrism that pervades so much of teaching and learning in history, even post-material turn.

What an example from my time as an undergraduate student attempts to illustrate is that our choices regarding how we develop assignments and exercises that help students learn the habits of historians are political. By continuing to rely on the same body of sources written by a relatively homogenous population, we amplify the views of traditional history-writers and only serve to replicate the (false) idea that the identities of those writing and written about were valued, powerful, or even existed. In my undergraduate classroom, I didn't see many important facets of my own identity (namely, that I am woman-identified) represented or positioned as an authoritative historical voice.

The tendency to circle back to the same bodies of source material means that many contemporary history and humanities instructors are currently unable to adequately construct teaching and learning environments that speak to, with, and for all members of the classroom. Elevating textual source material, and then only a limited share of these, has meant that vast numbers of practices, testimonies, and identities are absent from our received narratives. While student-centered (or learner-centered) teaching has long been a topic addressed by historians',<sup>16</sup> little work has been done to explore the impact of centering student identities by incorporating

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16. See Jonathan W. Zophy, "Student-Centered Teaching" *Perspectives on History*, February 1, 1991, <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/february-1991/student-centered-teaching>.

source material that embodies and/or points to these myriad identities. This response to the question of *why* is central to my own investigation and where I hope to offer the most insight.

Beginning with the general understanding that written texts, are, in fact made primary in most research and teaching efforts, then a simple answer to *why* is that it is imperative that we increase the breadth of historical narratives. Reflecting once again which historical actors had the ability to record written narratives and who and what, typically, they chose to write about, leaves us to conclude what a narrow picture of history is actually available. Actually addressing the centrality of text-based research and scholarly production calls us to consider how we may be limiting the possibilities of our teaching and research by the kind of primary sources we turn to. This conclusion has significant implications regarding how we all see each other and ourselves - imagining how we align with individual and group identities, ones that can transcend both time and location.

Knowing that a full breadth of identities cannot be interrogated or recognized from consulting written texts alone, I was pushed as an instructor from relying on this source material to fill my syllabi. Like many historians, archaeologists, and anthropologists before me, I turn to material culture to address the emerging gaps and silences. But I don't mean to "add-and-stir" and for this exercise to be simply recuperative. While incorporating objects can allow us access to the lives and actions of populations not represented in written accounts, it also calls us to adjust our methods of doing and teaching history. Turning to objects, I contend, allows for teachers and learners to represent, elevate, and interrogate a broad range of identities. When rooted in material culture theory, it offers the discipline novel epistemological routes for exploring knowledge and meaning-making, ones that seek to create and maintain inclusivity and an equitable environment. Material culture theory informs how we integrate objects in our

processes of research and knowledge creation. Notably, this approach helps us to understand how everyday objects can offer entry points to creating narratives that record the presence and contributions of often-marginalized or silenced historical populations, often times in ways that written source material is simply unable to. There are methodological and epistemological tools, albeit ones that require further development, at our disposal. Offering tools that guide research, writing,<sup>17</sup> and, to a lesser degree, teaching,<sup>18</sup> resources from the field of Material Culture Studies point us to questions related to *how*. Partnering these resources with scholarship from critical, feminist, and queer pedagogy deepens our ability to provide a rationale for how to conduct this work, and also offers another perspective on why we should pursue it in the first place.

### **Incorporating Engaged Pedagogy**

In the anecdote about my own experience as an undergraduate student that I shared above, I remarked that I did not see many of my own identities represented as I explored “western thought.” My identity as a woman, a salient category of identity that primarily dictates how I experience and navigate the world, was not represented or reflected in a way that made me feel that this identity was either valid or generative of authority. Though they figured prominently in the narratives I read, I did not see myself or what I value in Helen of Troy or in Monica, Augustine’s mother. I did not realize it at the time, but the portrayals of these women, the social scripts they presented, and behaviors they prescribed perhaps did more harm than good. With and through these figures, I could have been convinced about the vices of

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17. Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, “Writing Material Culture History,” in *Writing Material Culture History*, eds. Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015) 1-14.

18. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, et al., *Tangible Things: Making History Through Objects* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

weaponizing physical beauty or the virtues of mildness and obedience. As with many other women-identified people, these characteristics and the figures who embodied them showed me little about myself and my experience - or how I wanted to project myself in the future.

Thankfully, I have more than Helen of Troy and Saint Monica to serve as historical representations of my shared experience of womanhood (and other aspects of my identity). A wider range of women appear in the textual record than those included in the course, and a course on Western thought could include these. However, as I've begun to address here, it is through material culture - extraordinary goods to everyday objects - that we can access and construct narratives about the actions and contributions of a far wider range of people, women included, and often in ways that the written record cannot. As it did for me, representation matters. The adage "you can't be what you can't see" highlights that it is nearly impossible to validate or legitimize an aspect of identity without knowing first that it exists.<sup>19</sup> The ability of material culture to make marginalized or silenced populations visible can quite literally make known to a teacher or learner that who or what they are or want to be is true or valid or possible. Therefore, incorporating material culture gives teachers and learners greater possibilities to learn through, with, and from a broad range of people, some of whose identities may echo their own.

Seeing aspects of oneself represented in historical narratives and having access to people with a broad range of identities from whom to learn through, from, and with, I argue, directly contributes to the possibility for teachers and learners to develop a sense of self and well-being. I

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19. "You can't be what you can't see" is the tagline from the documentary film *Miss Representation*, a film I assign nearly every semester I teach Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies; reflecting on this line typically incites excellent in-class or online discussion. Directed by Jennifer Siebel Newsome, Los Angeles: Girls' Club Entertainment, 2011.

follow feminist teacher-scholar bell hooks and maintain that creating and maintaining well-being is central to the feminist classroom, and actually to all good pedagogy.

In the chapter titled “Engaged Pedagogy” in *Teaching to Transgress*, hooks presents a way of teaching and learning that values expression, empowerment, liberation, and risk-taking - all elements, hooks argues, that contribute to well-being.<sup>20</sup> She draws from her mentor, Paulo Friere, and similarly critiques a “banking model” of education that imagines assembly-line students who are forced into rote memorization. Both Friere and hooks argue that this kind of teaching and learning only replicates forms of domination. To combat the oppressive forces that manifest in education, hooks maintains that each member of a classroom is a unique being worthy of respect and care. hooks allows this outlook to frame an approach to teaching and learning: engaged pedagogy. In hooks’ conception and in my assessment, commitment to engaged pedagogy means hosting spaces and incorporating practices that create and maintain well-being.

I offer an amendment to hooks’ practice: coupling a commitment to engaged pedagogy with material culture-based teaching and learning practices presents exciting new possibilities for creating and maintaining well-being. Because material culture allows teachers and learners to see themselves and their identities represented in emerging historical narratives and understand that further pursuit of telling these kinds of narratives is valued and necessary, it presents another possible route for achieving well-being and serves as a feminist intervention.

I now return to my initial observation: that, although history and many disciplines in the humanities have taken up the charge to conduct research and create knowledge in ways that

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20. bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

respond to the material turn, instructors within these disciplines have not adequately explored how the material turn comes to bear on practices of teaching and learning within higher education. Learning through and with objects and drawing from material culture theory means that new pathways for research and knowledge creation are possible, not just to fill gaps and silences, but to re-think how and why we create the historical narratives in the first place. Drawing from engaged pedagogy allows us to theorize possibilities regarding what impact this can have on teachers and learners, especially as related to the development of well-being. Engaged pedagogy also offers a pathway for teaching and learning with material objects to serve a liberatory function. In its goal to empower, allow for expression, and promote risk-taking, engaged pedagogy compels teachers and learners to push the limits of what is possible.

### **Chapter Outlines**

In this dissertation, I am motivated by a central question: what are the possibilities for teaching and learning practices in a humanities classroom that ask instructors and students to both critically engage with and (sometimes) produce historical accounts through and with objects. To begin to answer this question, I draw from my own experience as an instructor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) in humanities (history, women's and gender studies) classrooms, where I have developed curricula that incorporates object-based teaching and learning and seeks to be inclusive and welcoming of people with all identities. I share reflections and resources in a number of formats: written text, assignment sheets, and teaching and learning video resources. Each body chapter is a combination of these three formats, and each focuses on a particular course. Additionally, I engage in theoretical discussions in which I pursue a topic that has particular bearing on the themes emerging in the course/chapter at hand. The three chapters focus on authority, identity, and unknowability, as outlined by feminist,



queer, and other critical approaches to teaching and learning. I return to these in an expanded discussion of engaged pedagogy in the conclusion to this dissertation.

In the review of literature that follows (chapter two), I survey three fields of study and scholarship: material culture studies, feminist pedagogy, and the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). When made to intersect, they offer exciting possibilities for teaching through and with objects in a humanities classroom in higher education. In the close of the review of literature chapter I point to a pedagogical antecedent - the object lesson - that foregrounds my own theorizing and contributions.

Within the body chapters in this dissertation (chapters three through five), I illustrate how I engage in praxis, allowing the theories and ideas I identify here, and the multiple ways in which they intersect, to bear on my practices of teaching and learning through and with material culture. Through theoretical engagement and in modeling possibilities from my own teaching practice, I promote a material turn in teaching and learning. Each of these chapters opens with a brief object history which features an object or set of objects that was important in the creation or facilitation of the curricula therein. The format of these Object Histories follows examples from large-scale public history projects like Wisconsin101 and the *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*; each brief history provides further context about the object/s and is also meant to whet the reader's intellectual appetite.

In chapter three, I open with an Object History about a relish tray (or Lazy Susan) gifted to me by my grandmother and note the role of the relish tray in Midwest dining culture, both past and present. Then, I recount my experience teaching HIST 243: History of Women in American Society. Students in HIST 243 created *The Supper Club*, a final project that was part research project and part art installation. Drawing from *The Dinner Party*, Judy Chicago's foundational

work of feminist art, in *The Supper Club* the students and instructor figure women in Wisconsin's history – many of whom are missing from or for whom only traces exist in the historical record – as historical subjects with a seat at the table. Because the course, and final project especially, called students to consider historical authority and their own (emerging) positions of authority within the classroom, academia, and wider world, I focus in particular on authority in this chapter.

Chapter four opens with an Object History about a set of educational dolls created by Women Against Rape (WAR) for use in Milwaukee-area classrooms in an effort to teach children about sexual assault and violence. Then, it explores how I undertook a massive pedagogical shift to orient a course toward object-based teaching and learning. After teaching WGS 201: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies in a relatively consistent format for nearly a decade, I observed a shift in student needs, knowledge, and identities; in part, my shift toward object-based teaching and learning responds to that, and this chapter focuses in particular on identities. As part of my curricular redesign that included a new course textbook and updated assigned readings to better reflect the variety of identities I wish to teach to, with, and for, I introduced a new assignment series I called "Object Lessons." This semester-long series asked students to engage in object-based learning.

Both chapter three and four allow me to discuss my own experience in the classroom and provide classroom-tested strategies and resources for a wide audience of teachers and learners. In chapter five, I venture into the unknown and describe my collaboration with a local public history project, *The Encyclopedia of Milwaukee (EMKE)*. I start this chapter with an entry I wrote for *EMKE* about Holy Hill, a local religious landmark. The entry is the basis for part of my curriculum design work. During the Spring 2019 academic semester at UWM, I was asked to

serve as the Curriculum Consultant for *EMKE*, developing materials for classroom use. Because I did not have the opportunity to pilot any assignments of activities in classrooms, and because how students and teachers might ultimately respond to the questions I ask them to consider and the sources I encourage them to interrogate could never be known to me, I frame this chapter with a discussion of the unknown and unknowability.

In the conclusion, chapter six, I return to the question I pose at the outset: what are the possibilities for teaching and learning practices that ask students to both critically engage with and (sometimes) produce historical accounts through and with objects. I also extend my discussion of well-being and describe how authority, identity, and unknowability (and the intersecting permutations of these topics) impact efforts to create and maintain well-being in the humanities classroom in higher education.

In all, my work here contributes to SoTL and extends the conversation of engaged pedagogy, suggesting how incorporating objects, object lessons, and object-centered narratives and histories opens avenues for co-creating and maintaining spaces that foster well-being. This project is multifaceted: it furthers feminism, taking a decidedly intersectional approach; it recognizes democracy, something to be achieved through engaged citizenship, as an unfinished project; and it argues that we must fight to assert the necessity of the humanities within higher education, particularly as humanistic disciplines have routinely been subject to censure, cuts, and attack. My work is recursive, co-constituted, cyclical, and collaborative. Each node identified above relies on the others - not as a foil, but as a part intrinsic to itself. In this work, I present myself as a teacher-activist, as my presence in the classroom is the primary way that I engage in feminist praxis.



## Chapter 2 Review of Literature

“The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy.”  
– bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*

My dissertation draws from three fields of study and scholarship, which I review here: material culture studies, feminist pedagogy, and the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). Material culture studies is a field that emerged relatively recently, within the last decades of the twentieth century and has roots in a number of other disciplines, including: art history, archaeology, anthropology, and history. Material culture studies calls for researchers to examine artifacts, objects, and other physical cultural remains utilizing a variety of methods, theories, and frameworks, in order to make inferences about social structures and relationships. While much of the research in material culture studies focuses on pre-historic populations, not all scholarship investigates past cultures.<sup>21</sup> Feminist theory has been incorporated within the field of material culture studies to some degree, and serves to both shift and uphold trends within the field. Using gender as a category of analysis (an intervention from the field of women’s history) both challenges the androcentrism of much of material culture scholarship and moves forward method, theory, and framework within the field as a whole. Gendered analyses shed light on the social construction of identities as well as how bodies and their function can be interpreted using a material culture lens.

To lay the groundwork for the basis of my own philosophy of teaching and learning, I provide a brief genealogy of feminist, queer, and other related critical approaches in teaching and

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21. For example, Brian McVeigh explores the gendered aspect of cute things in contemporary Japan, Brian McVeigh, “Commodifying Affection, Authority, and Gender in the Everyday Objects of Japan.” *Journal of Material Culture* 1(1996): 291-312.

learning. I also discuss research that addresses teaching and learning in history, just one type of a humanities classroom, in higher education. Notably, broader trends in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) in history, women's and gender studies, and elsewhere, emphasize that students should engage in disciplinary ways of thinking, learning the work of specialists in the field of study. For example, from a SoTL perspective, students in a history course should learn to "think historically." Thus, instructors' work should focus on helping students develop the skills and tools central to the doing of history.

In the final section of this review, I pay special attention to material culture studies that link with these discipline-specific approaches to teaching and learning, and point to examples that address both why and how instructors and curriculum developers in women's and gender studies and women's history classrooms might turn to "non-traditional" source material (like material culture) and object-based teaching and learning practices. I also examine the historiography of the object lesson, as this pedagogical form anticipates my own scaffolded approach to teaching and learning through and with material objects.

### **Material Culture Studies**

Material culture describes both a type of source material and a field of scholarly inquiry. As a category of source material, material culture designates physical objects, artifacts, things, items, *stuff*. As a field, often called material culture studies, it refers to scholarship within which examples of material culture – these objects, artifacts, and things – function centrally in analysis and interpretation. Material culture, in both of these senses, has long played an important role in developing an understanding of human culture and history.<sup>22</sup> Material culture theory provides a

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22. In what follows, examples of material culture will be referred to using a variety of terms, including object, artifact, and thing, often depending on and echoing the usage of the writer cited.

framework that directs research and knowledge production and promotes object-based inquiry as valid and carrying authority.

For only a fraction of the course of human history have individuals recorded their lives and the world around them through a written medium. Within that abbreviated time frame, what is written communicates for and about an equally minute portion of the population. As many researchers of prehistory and antiquity have illustrated, a consideration of material culture is not just useful, but necessary because the written record is either non-existent or lacking.<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, much of what there is to be known about human civilization is to be gleaned from non-written sources – from material culture such as hand axes, spear points, potsherds, and figurines.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, non-written evidence is central to investigations outside of prehistory or antiquity. For those traditionally under- or not represented in the written record, including women, children, and members of the non-elite, what is left in the material culture record may be the only extant evidence of their lives.<sup>25</sup>

Including objects in our analyses allows us to expand our base of available source material significantly. Furthermore, such an inclusion can allow researchers to complement other forms of source material, ask new questions, and develop new themes.<sup>26</sup> Disciplines that seek to

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23. In the introduction to *Tangible Things: Making History Through Objects* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, et al. engage in a discussion of the relationship between material culture and texts, promoting the usefulness and necessity of considering material culture.

24. For an excellent example that uses objects as an entry point in the presentation of a temporally and geographically vast (yet partial) historical account, see Neil MacGregor's *A History of the World in 100 Objects*, see Neil MacGregor, *A History of the World in 100 Objects* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011).

25. Marie Louise Stig Sorenson discusses this absence, and how a consideration of material cultures serves to address it, in *Gender Archaeology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).

26. Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, "Writing Material Culture History," in *Writing Material Culture History*, eds. Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 3.

address the history of human relationships and culture have incorporated examples of material culture into their body of available source material at different points in their development. For some, like archaeology, objects played a central, founding role. Tamar Hodos outlines the development of the field of material culture studies, placing its origin in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the emergence of classical archaeology, a discipline that relied (and relies) on typology to categorize artifacts, often as a means to measure a culture's development over time and in contrast to other cultures. For others, like history, we can identify a 'material turn' – a point at which the evaluation of material culture evidence gained a foothold and disciplinary credibility.<sup>27</sup> The incorporation of material evidence has great potential to contribute to our understanding of culture, relationships, and both the permanence and changeability of meanings and structures over time. Harnessing and focusing this potential has been the primary objective of material culture studies. In what follows, I survey a body of material culture studies scholarship in order to illustrate the emergence, critique, and re-application of certain salient trends in method, theory, and framework.

An early unified approach to the categorization and analysis of material culture was suggested by art historian Jules Prown in his 1982 article, "Mind in Matter". Since that time, Prown's method and the theoretical framework that undergirds it have been significantly questioned, upended, and, in part, returned to. Presenting the argument that objects are uniquely situated to provide evidence that other forms of source material, including written source material and ethnography, are not, Prown provides an early definition of the discipline,<sup>28</sup> stating

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27. Historical archaeologist James Deetz's *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 2010), first published in 1977, is an early example of the "material turn" within history.

28. Deeply embedded in Jules David Prown's approach is a reliance on hierarchies; he derisively distinguishes "fields" from "disciplines," calling the studying of material culture a



that it is “the study through artifacts of the beliefs...of a particular community or society at a given time.”<sup>29</sup> Importantly for Prown, material culture studies is a method, a “mode of cultural investigation,” that positions material remains not just as illustrations of facts found in texts, but as evidence in their own right. In his seminal article, Prown proposes a hierarchized classification system, based on an object’s function, into which objects of study are to be placed. Categories include: art, diversions, adornment, modifications of landscape, applied arts, and devices. Prown draws significantly from semiotics to frame the analysis and interpretation of material culture, arguing that there is a “language of objects” that is observable through systematic analysis, and that offers the possibility of knowing the inner meaning of an object through a systematic analysis of its external characteristics and apparent function.<sup>30</sup> He relies on the scientific method, and thus ultimately aims for the creation of objective knowledge.<sup>31</sup>

Breaking significantly from the idea that objective knowledge is possible, anthropologist Daniel Miller charges that a semiotic approach to the analysis of material culture – *stuff*, as he likes to call it – brings with it serious limitations. He suggests, for instance, that if clothing is subjected to a Prownian analysis, what results is the uncovering of a kind of symbolic language that could be said to indicate the wearer’s ‘true self’. However, if a person changed out of their

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“discipline,” and he elevates the category of art. Prown argues that because art’s purpose is an expression of style rather than function, it is more meaningful, “Mind in Matter,” *Winterthur* 17 (1982): 1-19.

29. Prown, “Mind in Matter,” 1.

30. Contemporary scholarship continues to follow this approach to determining the meanings of objects, as informed by semiotics. For example, see Florin Curta’s discussion of how clothing signals identity and David Pugh’s investigation of the shifting Pawnee gender roles after European contact using “the social semiotics of material culture,” Florin Curta, “Female Dress and ‘Slavic’ Bow Fibulae in Greece,” *Hesperia* 74 (2005): 101-146; Daniel Pugh, “Scenes of Exclusion: Historical Transformation and Material Limitations to Pawnee Gender Representation,” *Journal of Material Culture* 18 (2013): 56.

31. Prown, “Mind in Matter.”

sari and into a tweed blazer, would their inner self, their true identity also change? Miller uses an example such as this to illustrate the falsehood of depth ontology, suggesting that if an exterior like clothing is representative of inner identity, then both the interior and exterior become superficial and meaningless.<sup>32</sup> Departing also from Prown's thorough matrix of categorization, Miller presents no strict typology for or definition of material culture. Though he recognizes the study of objects as an interdisciplinary pursuit, drawing theoretically and methodologically from an array of disciplines, he suggests that the actual analysis of objects is best left undisciplined. Miller does contribute a larger framework for the field, however, with a call for and beginnings of the development of material culture *theory*.<sup>33</sup>

The theoretical framework presented by Miller relies on structuralism and emphasizes not only that there are relationships between objects, but that these relationships must be given historical context. Miller's "humility of things" – the idea that the less we notice objects, "the more powerfully they can determine our expectations," builds from Bourdieu's theory of practice, which suggests that routine interaction with systems of objects make people. In a move that departs from a reliance on a theory of representation, which Miller argues does not offer a sufficient means to discuss relationships between people and objects, Miller calls for material culture theory to draw from objectification, in which there is no separation between subject and object. As he situates his contribution to theoretical conceptions of stuff, Miller follows Hegel

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32. Daniel Miller, *Stuff* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010).

33. Miller's role in promoting the production of scholarship that investigates and theorizes about material culture should be noted here: along with his University College London colleague Christopher Tilley, Miller launched the *Journal of Material Culture* in 1996, a publication that exists in the present day. Their introduction to the first issue is included in this review, see Daniel Miller and Christopher Tilley, "Introduction to Journal of Material Culture: Inaugural Issue," in *The Modern Historiographical Reader: Western Sources*, ed. Adam Budd (New York: Routledge, 2009) 477-482.

and Marx's use of objectification to find a philosophical meaning of things, which builds from the premise that objects expand our presence and capacity as people. Further, what we produce becomes part of who we are, just as who we are becomes part of what we produce. Miller's integration of a dialectical sequence of production has had a profound and lasting impact on the development of material culture theory, arming researchers with a tool to investigate culture.<sup>34</sup>

Illustrating the ways in which the field of material culture studies maintains an interdisciplinary commitment as well as the integration of reflexivity, archaeologist Ian Hodder provides a bridge between Prown and Miller, between the systematic approach to the description and analysis of objects under investigation and the sophisticated conception of dialectical, multi-directional relationships between things and people.<sup>35</sup> Hodder's suggestion also has a political agenda: presenting the entanglement paradigm seeks to address the "lurking anthropocentrism" that, as Hodder implies, plagues studies of materiality and material culture. To remedy this, in part, Hodder centralizes dependence. Hodder's suggestion mediates and grapples with the identified bifurcation of treating material culture studies as a methodology by which to assess and analyze objects and the creation of a body of theory that frames an investigation of material objects and their role in the production of relationships and, ultimately, culture.

Hodder's primary contribution to the field of material culture studies is putting forth the idea of the entanglement, understood as both a framework for analysis and an object of study.<sup>36</sup> Entanglements describe a dialectic of dependence and dependency, or the reliance on things and the need to reproduce things already made. Built from the premise that "things fall apart," human

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34. Miller, *Stuff*.

35. see Ian Hodder, *Entangled* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

36. Hodder acknowledges that entanglements are not entirely his own idea and that similar approaches to the study of the relationships of things and people is also addressed by scholars of post-colonial studies, literary and cultural studies, and archaeology.

interaction with things fixes or entraps humans in relationships that are characterized by forms of care like material investment and maintenance. In short, “humans become regulated and disciplined in their interactions with things.”<sup>37</sup> Entanglements are to be investigated within, but not constrained by, spatial and temporal dimensions, allowing for layers of contextualization to frame the analysis and interpretation of material culture.<sup>38</sup>

While the development of entanglements draws from social theory, it is not entirely reliant on a theoretical conception, as Miller’s proposal is. Similarly, it is not so firmly rooted in outlining a strict methodology for the production of objective knowledge, as Prown advises.<sup>39</sup> Hodder’s approach calls for the incorporation of analytical science in an investigation of the relationships between humans and things,<sup>40</sup> marrying an objectively-minded practice with the interpretive framework of social theory. For Hodder, taking up entanglements as a framework for analysis should not necessarily supplant other methods, but rather is positioned to house a multitude of approaches in a multi-layered and multi-scalar analysis of thing:thing:human:human relationships.

The works by Prown, Miller, and Hodder are reflective treatises on the field – they critique other conceptions of the field and present new frameworks for analysis and interpretation with those critiques in mind. This lineage of scholarship illustrates how the field continues to struggle with determining if material culture studies is a method, a framework, a

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37. Hodder, *Entangled*, 86.

38. Here, I am reminded of anthropologist Clifford Geertz’s “thick descriptions.”

39. However, in recent years, several scholars have reconsidered and reapplied Prown’s prescribed method for observing, assessing, and determining the meaning of objects. See Sarah Anne Carter (below) and Michael Yonan, “Towards a Fusion of Art History and Material Culture Studies.” *West 86th 2* (2011): 232-248.

40. Hodder’s definition of a “thing:” something that has both duration and presence, including words, thoughts, institutions, sounds, and sights.

theory, or some combination. However, this series of texts, with its consistent male authorship and lack of any meaningful gendered analysis, highlights several ways in which androcentrism has remained relatively pervasive within the field. This fact has not gone without notice.

Feminist researchers representing the various disciplines in which material culture method, theory, and frameworks have been utilized have responded. An incorporation of feminist theory and the correlative use of gender as a category of analysis have had a significant impact on the field of material culture studies and the disciplines that incorporate it, especially archaeology.

### *Feminist Interventions in Material Culture Studies*

In a 1988 reflection on the incorporation of feminist theory and feminist perspectives within the field of archaeology, Marcia-Anne Dobres discusses the (initial) impact feminist theory has had on archaeological epistemology and methodology. In a critique of commonly-held beliefs about prehistoric gender relations, ones central to the discipline created and upheld by positivism and the pursuit of objective knowledge, Dobres suggests that the practice of feminist archaeology can call several assumptions into question, including those that perpetuate universals about gender essentialism, strict power structures based on a gender dichotomy, and origin stories rooted in biological and evolutionary determinism. For Dobres, incorporating feminist theory necessarily means using gender as a category of analysis. While not calling for a radical overhaul of archaeological epistemology and methodology, Dobres believes that incorporating feminist theory can fulfill several important functions, including encouraging researchers within the field to employ necessary self-reflexivity, troubling their understanding of sex and gender and their social constructedness, and challenging the traditional production of teleological narratives of social development.

Reflecting on the state of the field of archaeology just several years after Dobres, Shelby Brown's 1993 article similarly reviews the effect feminist theory and methods had on archaeology as a discipline. Brown indicates that feminist aims within archaeology through the end of the twentieth century have largely informed three trends: calling out male bias within the discipline, both within the profession and in the production of scholarship that assumes man is the normative historical actor; recuperative efforts that highlights women's viewpoints and roles in history; and finally reforms of archaeological method and theory so that it recognizes "the dynamics of gender relations and social constructs."<sup>41</sup>

Both of these examples illustrate a challenge to androcentrism – an aspect of the field that using gender as a category of analysis has significantly impacted. Feminist theory, in its many iterations, encourages the investigation of gender and gender inequality. This pursuit often becomes translated as an effort to uncover women, their roles and their voices. For many, taking gender into consideration is synonymous with either acknowledging the existence of women or women's objects in the historical or archaeological record or the incorporation of women's roles and voices.

Janet Spector's reflective essay "What This Axl Means: Toward a Feminist Archaeology" (1993) considers the progression of her own work, following the incorporation of a feminist approach. She outlines how she has responded to a perceived androcentric bias (both in methodology and practice) within archaeology. Spector's goal is not simply to account for the inclusion of feminist theory by adjusting theory or method, but rather she seeks to create a new

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41. Shelby Brown, "Feminist Research in Archaeology: What Does it Mean? Why is it Taking So Long?" in *Feminist Theory and the Classics*, eds. N.S. Rabinowitz and A. Richlin (New York: Routledge, 1993), 257; While not cited in my review of literature here, both Dobres and Brown follow Margaret Conkey and Janet Spector's 1984 feminist criticism of prehistoric archaeology. Brown laments that this piece had "little effect on their peers" (238).

epistemology: feminist archaeology. This new approach and framing of archaeology does not only address androcentrism, but ethnocentrism as well.<sup>42</sup>

As Spector's work illustrates, exposing the rampant androcentrism within the field of material culture studies has pushed political initiatives addressing representation - first, to insert women in the narrative, and subsequently, to use gathered momentum to present and re-present a multitude of populations, further challenging the notion of a normative male, heterosexual identity and experience. For example, Sian Halcrow and Nancy Tayles explore the treatment of childhood in the archaeological record. Grounded in an intersectional feminist approach, the researchers suggest that considering practices, identities, etc. on spectra is the best way to further theory and practice in archaeology, for it assists in moving past a reliance on dichotomies, in this case the dichotomy of child and adult. Furthermore, this article highlights the benefits of interdisciplinary exchange, a central element of material culture studies; the writers here apply social theory to data gathered through bioarcheology.<sup>43</sup>

Using gender as a category of analysis has called researchers like Joanna Sofaer to reconsider the body and its treatment in scholarship. In a 2006 publication that discusses the body as material culture within the archaeological context, Sofaer observes that the study of the body is caught between empirical science and academic social theory – in both enterprises, gender has great bearing. Through empirical science, she suggests, aspects of the body are quantifiable through measurable differences, allowing researchers to make generalizations about human populations, ones that often rely on and replicate gender dimorphism. On the other hand,

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42. Janet Spector, "What This Awl Means: Toward a Feminist Archaeology," in *Contemporary Archaeology, A Reader*, eds. Robert Preucel and Ian Hodder (Wiley, 1996).

43. Sian Halcrow and Nancy Tayles, "The Bioarcheological Investigation of Childhood and Social Age: Problems and Prospects," *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 15 (2008): 190-215.

humanistic study grounded in social theory recognizes the body and gender as socially-constructed and situated elements of an individual's identity, which sometimes challenges the gender binary. Sofaer calls for a study of the body that accounts for both biology and social construction, a difficult feat, in Sofaer's evaluation. She states, "archaeological bodies are not well captured either by biology or by social constructionism as the body is simultaneously biological, representational, and material."<sup>44</sup> Here again, using material culture as a site of investigation, and using theories that incorporate (or rely solely on) material culture in analysis benefit from and are complicated by material culture studies' interdisciplinary roots and commitment.

Sofaer's text focuses on skeletal remains in the burial context, but other researchers consider bodies in other states. I contend that considering the body as material culture is one of the most exciting and impactful developments in the field of material culture studies, one that centralizes and is built from using gender as a category of analysis. This development has its roots in archaeology, but has been taken up outside of the discipline.

Marie Louise Stig Sorenson builds from Sofaer's thesis that the body is material culture, charging that this idea offers archaeology and other related disciplines "a new critique of the distinction between culture and nature that was underwriting the simple but politically strategic separation of sex and gender made in the 1970s."<sup>45</sup> Further, Sorenson continues, because conceptions about gender are not only culturally and geographically situated, but also may shift over the course of an individual's lifetime (again, differently, depending on the cultural context),

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44. Joanna Sofaer, "Bodies and Boundaries," in *The Body as Material Culture: A Theoretical Osteoarchaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 11.

45. Marie Louise Stig Sorenson, "Gender, Material Culture, and Identity in the Viking Diaspora," *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 5 (2009): 255.



differentiating social categories matters and investigating gendered bodies matters. In her study of gender and changing gender identity using the lens of diaspora that explores the question “how does gender become a real, material aspect of people’s lives?”<sup>46</sup> Sorenson contends that because it is inherently linked to rupture and change, diaspora provides an opportunity to re-define self and identity, including gender identity. Investigating material culture that points to the construction and performance of gender of past populations may shed light on changing or continuing identity formation and formulations, and thus reflect larger systems of social power. Fundamental to Sorenson’s recommendation is the understanding that objects serve as reflections of norms (gender and otherwise) and that objects and identities are co-constituted. While she doesn’t undertake an explicit analysis of gender, material culture, and diaspora herself, she encourages other researchers to do so, claiming that appropriate analytical and theoretical frameworks are in place for such an investigation.

Myriem Naji’s article from 2009 represents an aspect of the field of material culture studies on which using gender as a category of analysis has had the most impact: studies of the living body. Building from Sofaer and with a pronounced incorporation of feminist theory and the understanding that gender is both a social construct and something to be performed, Naji investigates the living body and its co-constitutional relationship with material culture. Naji studies a population of contemporary (early twenty-first century) Sirwan women weavers and explains that the loom and the process of rug making become metaphors for the creation of self and identity; both the rug and the identity of the weaver are constantly in-the-making. In a particularly evocative passage, Naji details how the process of rug making physically alters a weaver’s body, as callouses are formed and wool fibers ingested or inhaled. Here, body and rug

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46. Sorenson, “Gender, Material Culture, and Identity,” 257.

are co-constituted. Further, through *doing*, embodied practice as a weaver, a woman's identity is co-constituted with the production of rugs, "embodied engagement," as termed by Naji.<sup>47</sup> Naji's exploration is the culminating example in this survey. It offers possibility for imagining how one's direct interaction with materiality, with objects, frames and enforces how one becomes gendered.

### **Feminist Pedagogy**

The second field on which my dissertation draws is feminist pedagogy. Carolyn's Shrewsbury's 1987 article "What is Feminist Pedagogy?" represents an early attempt at outlining the state of the field and goals of feminist pedagogy. For Shrewsbury, feminist pedagogy is a multi-rooted theory that dictates the teaching and learning process, one that is informed by feminist theory and also relies heavily on liberatory education theory and practices, as presented in the work of Paulo Friere. Termed critical pedagogy, Friere posits that through reflection, dialogue, and the development of *conscientização* ("learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions"), the oppressed can identify their oppression and then, through praxis, work to transform it.<sup>48</sup> Feminist pedagogy is primarily concerned with gender justice and overcoming oppressions. In addition to being a space for enacting leadership and learning how one can become a leader in return, the feminist classroom is a space essential to social change and a feminist revolution. Shrewsbury indicates three central elements of feminist pedagogy: empowerment, community, and leadership. These aspects are connected and dynamic, allowing

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47. Myriem Naji, "Gender and Materiality in the Making," *Journal of Material Culture* 14 (2009): 47-73.

48. First made available in an English translation in 1970, Paulo Friere's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* attempts to provide a framework for liberation through education, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*, trans. trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York, Bloomsbury: 2000).

for agency and transformation. Importantly, Shrewsbury elucidates that feminist pedagogy is not an “all or nothing” approach and that feminist classrooms can (and should) exist in a variety of forms.<sup>49</sup>

The transition from Friere’s critical pedagogy to contemporary feminist pedagogy is not a neat one. Though many draw from it, feminist and queer pedagogues have also heavily critiqued Friere’s text, exposing its androcentric assumptions and alarming lack of considering gender in an analysis of oppression.<sup>50</sup> In *Teaching to Transgress*, however, a key text cited by nearly every discussion of feminist pedagogy in my survey, bell hooks provides comprehensive discussions of Friere’s liberatory mode of education and effectively provides a bridge for these practices, re-interpreting and placing them in discussions of effective forms of feminist pedagogy.<sup>51</sup> hooks’ proposal of “engaged pedagogy” sits at the crux of, though is distinguished from, feminist and critical pedagogy, because of its singular emphasis on well-being.<sup>52</sup>

In a more recent (2012) example that seeks to outline the state of feminist pedagogy, specifically within the field of Women’s and Gender Studies, Holly Hassel and Nerissa Nelson characterize feminist pedagogy not as a specific method, but as a “number of key practices,” much in the way Shrewsbury does. The writers state that “ultimately, feminist educators hope to cultivate in students [a] feminist epistemological stance so that students leave the course

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49. Carolyn Shrewsbury, “What Is Feminist Pedagogy?” *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 15 (1987): 6-14.

50. See Elizabeth Ellsworth, “Why Doesn’t This Feel Empowering? Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy,” in *Feminisms and Critical Pedagogy*, eds. Carmen Luke and Jennifer Gore (New York: Routledge, 1992), 90-119; Jane Kenway and Helen Modra, “Feminist Pedagogy and Emancipatory Possibilities,” in *Feminisms and Critical Pedagogy*, eds. Carmen Luke and Jennifer Gore (New York: Routledge, 1992) 138-166.

51. bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

52. hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 15.

equipped to approach future learning inside and outside the classroom through a feminist lens.”<sup>53</sup>

Hassel and Nelson here echo Shrewsbury’s point that the feminist classroom is a space to develop a feminist consciousness, which can direct interactions in the ‘outside’ world – meaning outside of the classroom. Illustrating the revolutionary potential of feminist pedagogy, they build on Friere’s mandate for instructors and learners to co-develop a consciousness that recognizes oppression and its intersections, one that calls for action both inside and outside the classroom. In their chapter, Hassel and Nelson propose that “participatory learning, validation of personal experience, critical thinking...reflexivity, and community” are fundamental elements of feminist pedagogy.<sup>54</sup>

### **Teaching and Learning in History**

The third field on which my dissertation draws is the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), especially teaching and learning in history, which sometimes presents parallel concerns, reflections, and goals to those of critical pedagogues. Joel Sipress and David Voelker, for example, discuss the tension between learning history and doing history, and many of the issues they raise echo trends or discussions taken up by forms of critical pedagogy. They focus their critique on the “coverage model” of education; in their assessment, this coverage model has dictated a vast majority of the ways in which history has been taught, especially introductory history courses. Paolo Friere and bell hooks (among other feminist and critical pedagogues) similarly recognize and critique this approach to teaching and learning, but refer to it as the “banking model” or “banking system” of education, one “based on the assumption that

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53. Holly Hassel and Nerissa Nelson, “A Signature Feminist Pedagogy: Connection and Transformation in Women’s Studies,” in *Exploring More Signature Pedagogies: Approaches to Teaching Disciplinary Habits of Mind*, eds. Regan Gurung, Nancy Chick, and Aeron Haynie (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2012), 151.

54. Hassel and Nelson, “A Signature Feminist Pedagogy,” 146.

memorizing information and regurgitating it representing gaining knowledge that could be deposited, stored, and used at a later date.”<sup>55</sup> In response to a form of pedagogy that “casts the professor in a role of producer of scholarly knowledge, with the students relegated to the status of consumers whose tasks are to absorb and reproduce expert knowledge,” Sipress and Voelker advocate for a form of history pedagogy that instead asks students to “do history.” For the writers, “doing history” means “to enter an evidence-based argumentative discourse about the human past.”<sup>56</sup> This proposed shift in history pedagogy does not seek to do away with lectures or textbooks, but it does challenge teachers and learners to “view historical content as simply the subject matter about which our students will learn to argue.” This means the development of analytical skills and the ability to think like a historian, that is, having the ability to uncover and make arguments based on interactions with source material, are the primary goals in this re-imagined history classroom.

An approach to teaching history that focuses on developing skills of critical analysis instead of coverage has numerous benefits, but does not come without challenges. Thomas Andrews and Flannery Burke propose that students should be taught to think like historians, or to acquire habits of mind historians develop through their training within the discipline.<sup>57</sup> Doing so facilitates the development of critical analysis skills and has the possibility to encourage students

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55. hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 5; Julianna Guillard alleges that what sets apart a feminist classroom from all others is that feminist pedagogy rejects the banking model of education in “Potentialities of Participatory Pedagogy in the Women’s Studies Classroom, *Feminist Teacher* 23 (2012): 50-62.

56. Joel Sipress and David Voelker, “From Learning History to Doing History: Beyond the Coverage Model,” in *Exploring Signature Pedagogies: Approaches to Teaching Disciplinary Habits of Mind*, edited by Regan Gurung, Nancy Chick, and Aeron Haynie, (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2008), 20-1.

57. Andrews and Burke introduce the “five C’s of historical thinking:” change over time, context, causality, contingency, and complexity in “What Does It Mean to Think Historically?” *Perspectives* 45.1 (2007).

to become better citizens, because future citizens would “not only care about history, but also...contemplate it.”<sup>58</sup> However, as Sam Wineburg assesses, practicing historical thinking for oneself and cultivating this skill in students is not easy. He laments that it is “neither a natural process nor something that springs automatically from psychological development...its achievement, I argue, actually goes against the grain of how we ordinarily think, one of the reasons why it is much easier to learn names, dates, and stories than it is to change the basic mental structures we use to grasp the meaning of the past.”<sup>59</sup> In this he parallels bell hooks, who likewise consistently asserts that engaging in progressive or critical pedagogical practices is harder than the alternative, but is always the better place to focus one’s energy.<sup>60</sup>

Only a few scholars of SoTL in history address feminist or queer approaches, a point also made by Linda Levstik, who discusses a general lack of research on teaching women’s history, and ends with a call to incorporate gender in research of teaching and learning history.<sup>61</sup> Moving away from the coverage model also means decentering classroom authority, according to Michael Goldberg, feminist pedagogue and history instructor. The benefits Goldberg brings to his women’s history classroom are two-fold and informed by the intersection of feminist and history pedagogy. First, the goal to shift classroom authority from the instructor to the students follows a feminist call to identify and upend systems that unequally distribute power. The way in which Goldberg achieves this, in part, is by following Wineburg’s call to teach historical

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58. Andrews and Burke, “What Does It Mean to Think Historically?” 35.

59. Sam Wineburg, “Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts,” in *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 7.

60. hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*.

61. Linda Levstik, “What Educational Research Says About Teaching and Learning Women’s History,” in *Clio in the Classroom: A Guide For Teaching U.S. Women’s History*, eds. Carol Berkin, Margaret S. Crocco, and Barbara Winslow (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

thinking. As students develop historical thinking skills, and are able to apply them in a critique of other scholarship and in analysis of primary source materials in the creation and investigation of a historical question, they increasingly acquire authority as producers of historical narratives – historians – in their own right. Goldberg admits that sometimes students are not up to this task and do not thrive in this classroom environment. He seeks to mitigate these challenges by organizing students into groups that create a built-in student support system, frequent low-stakes assignments, and thorough assessment throughout the course of the semester, with the goal that, along with the students, he can know how students are progressing in their development of historical thinking skills.<sup>62</sup> In another example, Katrina Srigley uses feminist pedagogy and indigenous methods to upset master narratives in Canadian history as well as traditional ways of teaching history; she finds this approach politically necessary for how history is positioned and used can facilitate change, social and otherwise. Her reflection of her teaching practices discusses historical thinking, as laid out by Peter Seixas.<sup>63</sup>

### **Using Non-Traditional Source Material in the Humanities Classroom**

Along with drawing ideas and methodologies from the fields of material culture studies, feminist pedagogy, and SoTL, my dissertation also builds on earlier works that both use and analyze non-traditional source material within the classroom, particularly things other than written documents. Written or text-based evidence is widely understood as the most valid form

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62. Michael Lewis Goldberg, “Redesigning the U.S. Women’s History Survey Using Feminist Pedagogy, Educational Research, and New Technologies,” in *Clio in the Classroom: A Guide for Teaching U.S. Women’s History*, eds. Carol Berkin, Margaret S. Crocco, and Barbara Winslow (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 209-222.

63. Katrina Srigley, “From Muzzu-Kummik-Quae to Jeanette Corbiere Lavell and Back Again: Indigenous and Feminist Approaches to the First-Year Course in Canadian History,” in *Feminist Pedagogy in Higher Education: Critical Theory and Practice*, eds. Tracy Penny Light, Jane Nicholas, and Renee Bondy (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2015).

of historical source material. All other forms of evidence, including material culture and visual evidence, customarily serve a complementary or illustrative role in relation to written source material, rather than challenging it. Text-based and written sources top a perceived hierarchy, a phenomenon commonly referred to as the “tyranny of the text,” which shapes how we construct, learn, and know, and what we deem valid or truthful. Along with others cited here, I advocate instead incorporating material culture in a feminist or history classroom, because of its ability to represent marginalized voices in different way, often more comprehensively than texts. I suggest this incorporation as well because material culture theory, a framework to interpret meanings of objects (and even architecture, landscape, and other products of human intervention), is “concerned with the relationship between artifacts and social relations...and aims to systematically explore the linkage between the construction of social identities and the production and use of culture,” a key aim of feminist pedagogy.<sup>64</sup>

Some early feminist pedagogy proposed the “integration of aesthetic appreciation, oral expression, written expression, and performance” as necessary elements within feminist curricula that seek to ameliorate “the dysfunctional state of public education.”<sup>65</sup> This recognition of imagination-intellect as a pedagogical approach was important, but it was silent regarding the use

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64. “Journal of Material Culture,” Sage Journals, accessed July 15, 2016, <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/mcu>. No scholarship reviewed here refers to examples of non-written source material as material culture, so I use the term “non-traditional” in this section to refer to examples of source material that fall outside the category of written sources.

65. Mary E. Weems, “Utopia: Critical Imagination – Intellect as Pedagogical Focus,” in *Public Education and the Imagination Intellect: I Speak From the Wound in My Mouth*, 1-9, (New York: Lang, 2003), 3. For other advocates of an imagination-intellect approach that suggest student interaction with “aesthetic appreciation and expression,” see Maxine Greene, “Discovering a Pedagogy,” in *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, Arts, and Social Change*, 44-59, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995), 44-59; and Susan Iverson, “The Power of Imagination-Intellect in Teaching Feminist Research,” in *Feminist Pedagogy in Higher Education: Critical Theory and Practice*, eds. Tracy Penny Light, Jane Nicholas, and Renee Bondy (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2015), 179-196.



of non-written *source material* within the classroom. Though there is relatively little that comprehensively addresses its inclusion in the classroom, several edited volumes include chapters that advocate for the use of non-traditional source material within the classroom. These include *Feminist Pedagogy in Higher Education: Critical Theory and Practice* (2015) and *Clio in the Classroom: A Guide for Teaching U.S. Women's History* (2009). Essays in these also specifically draw from feminist pedagogy and history pedagogy.

In the introduction to the first text listed, writers Tracy Penny Light, Jane Nicholas, and Renee Bondy reflect on feminist pedagogy's role in higher education, observing that visual culture is an emerging form of source material in the feminist classroom. They contend that visual culture presents a new form of classroom engagement.<sup>66</sup> Within that same text, a single chapter written by Jacqueline Wilson directly reflects on the use of images within the history classroom. For Wilson, the use of images follows E.P. Thompson's call to create "history from below," in that the content under analysis is mundane (the source material considered are images of bathroom stall graffiti) and represents a usually-marginalized or silenced population (prison inmates). From a feminist perspective, Wilson argues that using visual images as the primary means of introducing and investigating a historical event is necessary because it provides an opportunity for "stealth feminism." Strategically, the instructor doesn't mention the "F word," an approach that allows students to conclude for themselves the necessity of using gender as a tool for analysis. Additionally, Wilson couples her stealth feminist approach with the use of images, arguing that together they address academic androcentrism, are uniquely suited for the particular

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66. Renee Bondy, Jane Nicholas, and Tracy Penny Light, "Introduction: Feminist Pedagogy in Higher Education," in *Feminist Pedagogy in Higher Education: Critical Theory and Practice*, eds. Tracy Penny Light, Jane Nicholas, and Renee Bondy (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2015).

student demographics, and challenge masculinized and militarized master narrative. Each of these reasons draws on established goals of feminist pedagogy outlined above.<sup>67</sup>

Just two chapters in *Clio in the Classroom* reflect on the inclusion of non-traditional source material in the women's history classroom. In the first, Tracey Weis holds that using images in a classroom is a pedagogical intervention or pedagogical approach and ponders, "if visual evidence were at the center of our analysis of gender and historical agency, how would our account and analysis be different?"<sup>68</sup> For Weis, visual images serve as "sources that shed light on assumptions," especially when considered in juxtaposition with other kinds of source material, including other visual images, or even text-based evidence. Challenging assumptions (a familiar output of applying feminist theory in analysis) according to this logic, can cause teachers and learners to come to new or different conclusions. Weis uses the chapter to discuss and reflect upon her own use of visual images within a higher education history classroom and acknowledges that although images have always been present in her pedagogical approach, she had not realized the need for a method that could provide a structure for presenting and analyzing them. Her intention is not to theorize about the use of visual images as a pedagogical device, but to suggest ways in which they propose new questions to investigate. She does not ask *why* to use visual images, but, using examples from her own teaching practice, *how* visual images can provide alternative perspectives to the teaching process and what kinds of historical narratives can be produced through the presentation and analysis of this kind of source material. Weis'

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67. Jacqueline Wilson, "Don't Mention the 'F' Word: Using Images of Transgressive Texts to Teach Gendered History," in *Feminist Pedagogy in Higher Education: Critical Theory and Practice*, eds. Tracy Penny Light, Jane Nicholas, and Renee Bondy (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2015).

68. Tracey Weis, "Teaching Women's History with Visual Images," in *Clio in the Classroom: A Guide For Teaching U.S. Women's History*, eds. Carol Berkin, Margaret S. Crocco, and Barbara Winslow (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 224.

discussion moves forward opportunities for feminist praxis with the inclusion of non-traditional source material.<sup>69</sup>

Aligning most with my own research and teaching goals, Anne Derosie and Vivien Rose outline and provide a pedagogical rationale for teaching women's history through three-dimensional objects, which can include material culture, architecture, and landscape.<sup>70</sup> Derosie and Rose's instructions for how to use objects in the contemporary women's history classroom are strongly reminiscent of instructions for presenting an object lesson as outlined in Sarah Carter's work, discussed below. They indicate: "leading students through a discussion about the bare facts of each object is the first step in separating observation from analysis...when the objects have been described fully, it is time to move on to an analysis of their meaning, or of what they can tell us about women's experiences."<sup>71</sup> The writers acknowledge the benefits of being able to investigate populations under-represented in traditional forms of source material. Advocating strongly for its use, Derosie and Rose emphasize the importance of non-traditional source material in classrooms that investigate race, class, gender, and its intersections, stating: "engagement with objects offers resolution, density of information, scale, authenticity, and value...[and are] optimal tools to provide entry into the *underdocumented lives of American women of all races and classes*" [emphasis mine]. The writers also propose that this pedagogical strategy applies widely to the field: "nearly every topic in the U.S. history survey course can be approached through considerations of objects, buildings, and cultural landscapes that provide

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69. Weis, "Teaching Women's History," 224.

70. Anne Derosie and Vivien Rose, "History You Can Touch: Teaching Women's History through Three Dimensional Objects," in *Clio in the Classroom: A Guide For Teaching U.S. Women's History*, eds. Carol Berkin, Margaret S. Crocco, and Barbara Winslow (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

71. Derosie and Rose, "History You Can Touch," 242-3.

evidence of women's lives." Using objects, as opposed to other types of source material, allows for students to discuss ways of knowing, and also facilitates students' varied learning styles.<sup>72</sup> Clearly, using objects in the classroom, in addition to developing students' critical analysis skills, functions to challenge the tyranny of the text and fulfills goals of feminist pedagogy in one fell swoop.

### **Moving Toward the Object Lesson**

Incorporating objects and object-based teaching and learning methods in the humanities classroom in higher education presents new opportunities and challenges for teachers and learners, but is not without precedent. In "Object Lessons and American Culture," Sarah Anne Carter investigates the object lesson and differentiates between its use as a pedagogical approach and as a metaphor; in the text, Carter traces changes in the use of the term and form of pedagogy over time. The text at hand is far more concerned with outlining the development of object lessons as a classroom method, though it takes time to acknowledge how object lessons, as a pedagogical form, had significant bearing on the term "object lesson" in its use as a metaphor, a use that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century and out of a racialized context. In both ways, object lessons were a cultural phenomenon not just because of their pedagogical usefulness, but because of the impact the form has on rhetoric; object lessons become a way of thinking about material culture and American cultural life.<sup>73</sup> In the monograph that builds from her dissertation, Carter provides thorough historical context of the nineteenth century in Europe and North America (concern with morality, ability to reason through observation and the lasting

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72. Derosie and Rose, "History You Can Touch," 249.

73. Sarah Anne Carter, "Object Lessons in American Culture" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2010).

impact of empiricism, and instability produced by and around the American Civil War), and offers a picture of the development of object lessons.<sup>74</sup>

Carter traces the roots of the object lesson as a pedagogical device to the writings of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, who lived and worked in late-eighteenth and early nineteenth century Switzerland. Pestalozzi was greatly influenced by empiricism, which maintains that knowledge is gained through sensation and reflection. In this very early form, this Pestalozzian curriculum previews many tenets of critical and feminist pedagogy: it incorporates social justice initiatives (Pestalozzi wrote about how education could serve the poor); it emphasizes women's roles (though, here, in the role of mother and solely in children's education); it is a reaction to the later-called "banking method" (Friere)<sup>75</sup> or "coverage model" (critiqued by Lendol Calder)<sup>76</sup> of education that relies on rote memorization and regurgitation of facts or information provided by an instructor; and it acknowledges the instructor's ability to learn from their students.

Pestalozzi's teaching approach made its way to nineteenth century England, where Elizabeth Mayo and her brother Charles (a student of Pestalozzi) refined the practice and created manuals and guidebooks like *Lessons on Objects*, first published in 1830. The Mayos developed and emphasized object lessons as a teaching *method*. They conceived of learning as a path for moral development and did not necessarily share Pestalozzi's proto-social justice initiatives; learning through materials, for the Mayos, was reserved for privileged English boys. Drawing from these resources and building from the work of her father Edward Austin Sheldon, Mary Sheldon Barnes expanded the practice and teaching through and with objects within the U.S.

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74. Sarah Anne Carter, *Object Lessons: How Nineteenth-Century Americans Learned to Make Sense of the Material World* (New York, Oxford University Press: 2018).

75. See Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

76. See Lendol Calder, "Uncoverage: Toward a Signature Pedagogy for the History Survey," *The Journal of American History* 92, no. 4 (2006): 1358-370.

context. Through the work of Sheldon and Sheldon Barnes, the object lesson became a relatively common teaching strategy in the U.S. by the 1860s. The method could be found everywhere from normal school to public school classrooms; it was met with mixed enthusiasm and achieved the same in regards to success.<sup>77</sup> Like the Mayos, Sheldon Barnes conceived of object lesson pedagogy as a *method* for teaching and provided a crystallized pedagogical approach. Carter asserts that Sheldon Barnes' contribution establishes patterns of thinking through and with material objects.

Themes carried throughout the lineage of these three iterations in the development of the object lesson include: the centrality of observation and reflection; the positioning of object lessons as a method; the use of object lesson instruction as a way to develop morality and (later) citizenship skills. Drawing a broad observation from this summary of use, Carter explains that as an ideal, "the classroom practice of object lessons was premised on the notion that [students] needed to be taught to experience the objects and images around them more fully...Educators hoped that through object lessons [students] would learn to derive meaning from the material world and to reason both critically and morally based on this knowledge."<sup>78</sup>

Carter is careful to distinguish the critical difference between object lessons (that which develops students' senses, and outlines a process of knowledge creation) and teaching with objects (teaching and learning methods in which objects serve as examples or illustrations, or as a stand-in for a memorized concept). In Carter's assessment, the exploration of object lessons as a pedagogical form historicizes the development of material culture methods. Drawing parallels to Jules Prown's suggested methodology for the assessment of material culture, Carter asserts

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77. Carter, *Object Lessons*.

78. Carter, *Object Lessons*, 2-3.

that object lessons provided a systematic study of material objects. While the term “material culture” was not in use during object lessons’ heyday, in the present day it can be used to describe the aforementioned material objects placed at the center of student learning. Mirroring Daniel Miller’s usage, “material culture” is an inclusive term used to describe a wide array of objects, artifacts, and things.<sup>79</sup> Both object lessons and material culture analysis represent multi-contextualized form for the production of knowledge.

My interest in material culture studies, an emergent discipline that offers several paradigms for analyzing and making meaning from objects,<sup>80</sup> and identity-focused, inclusive pedagogy, as framed by feminist pedagogy, led me to the object lesson. Responding to the material turn and asking students to do the work of disciplinary practitioners - historians, feminist and queer theorists - means that my intervention falls squarely within the purview of SoTL. As I outlined in the introduction to this dissertation, the object lesson is a pedagogical form that I wish to draw from, not simply resurrect or re-appropriate, as a scholarly tradition with opportunities for exploration and reinvention.

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79. Miller, *Stuff*.

80. The *Journal of Material Culture* began in 1996. While the birth of the journal does not mark the start of the discipline, it does note when material culture studies entered the academic mainstream.

### Chapter 3

#### *The Supper Club: Objects in a Women's History Classroom*

##### **Object History: Grandma's Relish Tray**

Gifted to Audrey (nee Glasser) and Joe Faust to celebrate their 1953 wedding in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, this glass relish tray helps to explore the connections between the American Midwest's popular supper clubs and their impact on domestic dining and entertaining practices. Roughly twelve inches in diameter, the tray has a raised edge with large, decorative scallops. Two circular registers with a radiating, diamond motif surround a central sunburst pattern. The relief of the pattern can be felt on the bottom of the tray; the top is smooth, so cut vegetables, olives, pickles, or even holiday cookies could be presented upon a level surface.<sup>81</sup> While a beautiful and sentimental object, my grandmother's relish tray is not a fine piece of American brilliant-cut glass; it has no distinguishing maker's mark. However, two gifts - glass candy dishes - in *Bride's Gift Record* are identified by pattern name, suggesting their importance.<sup>82</sup> Listed in

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81. I have few recollections of the tray discussed here actually being used during family gatherings. My grandmother, mother of eight children, often hosted her children, grandchildren, and members of the extended family - upwards of fifty people - for holiday gatherings. A keepsake like this tray would have been too precious to put out where children were running and playing and a hoard of aunts bumped in the farmhouse kitchen as they set out the meal. Instead, I remember that a large plastic tray (likely made by Tupperware) held cut vegetables in molded compartments and my grandmother's famous spinach dip rested in the center of the tray in a separate aluminum bowl. My grandmother gifted the tray to me around 2016 or 2017. I keep the tray, along with other serving dishes, in my own china cabinet. I use the tray on occasion, usually to serve cheese and sausage at a party. Typically, I overlap slices of Colby-jack cheese and venison summer sausage - a classic Wisconsin party combination - so that my design echoes the radiating diamond pattern of the tray.

82. The *Bride Gift Record* was produced by Boston Store, a department store headquartered in Milwaukee, WI. In 1953, when my grandparents were married, Milwaukee was also home to Gimbels and Schuster's, stores that appear in the "Where gift was purchased" column of the gift registry. In addition to providing a space where a bride could record any gifts she received and note that she had sent a thank-you in return, the *Bride Gift Record* contains planning timelines, budgets, shopping lists for the bride's trousseaux (items, of course, could be purchased at Boston Store), and even suggestions for honeymoon locales, *Wedding Embassy Yearbook: Bride's Gift Record* (New York, Embassy Publishing Company, 1952; see Thomas J. Jablonsky,



two separate entries as “Candlewick candy dish,” the dishes were made by Imperial Glass, a company headquartered in Ohio. Imperial Glass made the wildly popular Candlewick crystal pattern, characterized by a delicate border of small glass orbs, from 1936 until the company shut down in 1984.<sup>83</sup> Beginning in the early 1900s, Toledo, Ohio became known as the “glass capital of the world.”<sup>84</sup>

“Relish tray” is a catch-all term to describe plated food, usually raw vegetables, pickled cucumbers, olives, cold cuts, or even boiled shrimp, served as part of a buffet meal or as an appetizer before a meal. The term can refer to the plate or the food, itself. Though she calls it a relish tray, in my grandmother’s *Bride’s Gift Record*, the tray is listed as a “Lazy Susan.”<sup>85</sup>

Relish trays, the food item, were, and continue to be, significant to Midwest dining culture. Often offered as complimentary, relish trays accompanied a brandy old fashioned (or several) at the start of an evening-long meal at a supper club. A uniquely Midwest institution, supper clubs offered residents in small-town Wisconsin a predictable, rotating menu of Friday fish fry, Saturday prime rib, and Sunday chicken dinners in an intimate setting that often featured dark wood paneled walls, booths upholstered in velvet, and an array of taxidermy animals meant as

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“Department Stores,” in *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, edited by Amanda Seligman and Margo Anderson (Encyclopedia of Milwaukee, 2016), <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/departments-stores/>.

83. Myrna Garrison and Bob Garrison, *Candlewick: The Crystal Line* (Schiffer Publishing Limited, 2012).

84. Libbey Glass, headquartered in Toledo, carries this legacy into the twenty-first century and is the largest manufacturer of glass dinnerware. Libbey was well-known for their cut glass, “Libbey Glass Company,” Ohio History Connection, accessed May 29, 2019, [http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Libbey\\_Glass\\_Company](http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Libbey_Glass_Company).

85. Written in a hand different from my grandmother’s, the person noting the receipt of the “Lazy Susan” used their own terminology to refer to the gifts. The record has written entries for ninety-five gifts that Audrey and Joe received for their wedding. Of these, at least ten are for items made of glass (including a number of ash trays and a torte plate), and four could be used as relish trays (including entries for “Lazy Susan,” “Lazy Susan - large,” and “hors d’oeuvre server”).

decoration.<sup>86</sup> A meal at a supper club was certainly a special event, though, for nearly a century, they have provided access to fine dining for largely middle-class, rural Midwesterners.<sup>87</sup>

As a young woman living in Milwaukee, my grandmother went on dates to the restaurant at Schroeder's Hotel (in the present day, the Hilton Hotel),<sup>88</sup> and the Boulevard Inn, formerly located on Sherman Boulevard in Milwaukee's Sherman Park neighborhood.<sup>89</sup> There, she enjoyed relish trays with cocktails, along with the company of her date, before her meal. She recalls using her own glass trays to entertain after she and my grandfather married, offering an assortment of pickles, carrots, celery, and dip - items she enjoyed in restaurants - to her guests.<sup>90</sup> In the present day, both supper clubs and celebrating their culinary traditions, including "locavore" eating, drinking craft brews, and recreating relish trays at home, remain popular. A recent article in the magazine *Midwest Living*, suggests that readers first visit a local thrift store

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86. See Ann Christenson, "Anatomy of a Wisconsin Supper Club," *Milwaukee Magazine*, January 26, 2018, <https://www.milwaukeeemag.com/anatomy-of-a-wisconsin-supper-club/>; Ron Faiola, *Wisconsin Supper Clubs: Another Round*, 6th ed. (Agate Midway, 2016); Mary Bergin, *Wisconsin Supper Club Cookbook: Iconic Fare and Nostalgia from Landmark Eateries* (Guilford, Connecticut, Globe Pequot Press: 2015).

87. For example, Lehmann's Supper Club is a fourth-generation family-run supper club in Rice Lake, Wisconsin. Rice Lake has a population of under ten-thousand people, though it is a popular summer vacation destination in Wisconsin's north woods. Opened in 1934, Lehmann's is one of the oldest supper clubs in the state, "About Us," Lehmann's Supper Club, accessed October 5, 2018, <http://lehmannssupperclub.net/about-us/>.

88. See Bobby Tanzilo, "Urban Spelunking: Schroeder Hotel/Hilton City Center," On Milwaukee, March 4, 2014, <https://onmilwaukee.com/history/articles/hiltontour.html>.

89. See "Gary Strothmann and the Boulevard Inn," Picturing Milwaukee: The BLC Field School, accessed October 5, 2018, <http://blcfieldschool2014.weebly.com/gary-strothmann-and-the-boulevard-inn.html>; Paul Geenan, "Sherman Park," in *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, edited by Amanda Seligman and Margo Anderson (Encyclopedia of Milwaukee, 2016), <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/sherman-park/>.

90. Hosting cocktail or dinner parties was a short-lived phenomenon for my grandparents. Less than a year after their wedding, my grandmother gave birth to the first of eight children.

to buy a “pretty, vintage glass tray” upon which to arrange cheese, olives, and pickled beets as they construct their own relish tray.<sup>91</sup>

## Introduction

In the present day in the United States, given the explicitly misogynistic, sexist, and generally troubling (and unchecked) views of those in positions of social and political power, as well as persistent and troubling rates of violence against women-identified people, it may be possible to argue that the lives of women and women-identified people are of little social importance.<sup>92</sup> Perhaps, too, a historical outsider could analyze our own moment and determine, given nearly daily reports of the erasure, denial, and subjection of women’s lives, that narratives about women’s experiences are not valued and worth our time and consideration. However (and perhaps, in reaction to the very forces I just mentioned), in recent years in the English-speaking west, we have seen a rise in popularized and award-winning narratives focused on the lives of historical figures including Queen Elizabeth (the Netflix television series *The Crown*, currently in production),<sup>93</sup> Queen Victoria (the Amazon Prime television series, also currently in production),<sup>94</sup> and Laura Ingalls Wilder (writer Caroline Fraser won the 2018 Pulitzer Prize in biography for *Prairie Fires: The American Dreams of Laura Ingalls Wilder*)<sup>95</sup>. Also, we are

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91. “How to Build a Relish Tray,” *Midwest Living*, accessed October 5, 2018, <http://www.midwestliving.com/food/entertaining/how-to-build-a-relish-tray/>.

92. “Victims of Sexual Violence: Statistics,” RAINN, accessed May 7, 2019, <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/victims-sexual-violence>.

93. Claire Foy, the actress who played Queen Elizabeth, won the 2017 Emmy for ‘Best Performance in a Television Series - Drama,’ “The Crown: Awards,” IMDb, accessed January 5, 2019, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4786824/awards>.

94. “Victoria,” IMDb, accessed January 5, 2019, [https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5137338/?ref\\_=tt\\_rec\\_tt](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5137338/?ref_=tt_rec_tt).

95. In the popular history blog, “Made by History,” hosted by *The Washington Post*, Elizabeth Cobbs discusses the repeated lack of attendance to - even erasure of - women’s history

witnessing a greater attendance to the lives of women of color, including movies such as the critically acclaimed *Hidden Figures* (2016) and a highly-anticipated television show (currently in production) about the life of Madam C.J. Walker.<sup>96</sup> Fully-fictionalized narratives like the stunningly popular book series-turned-television series *Game of Thrones*, a kind of pseudo-history narrative, feature many woman and girl-identified characters with exciting plot lines that allow them the same choices and agency as their man and boy-identified counterparts, and sometimes more glory. Another fictional novel-turned-television show, *The Handmaid's Tale*, imagines a United States after a religiously conservative faction wins a civil war, eerily telling of what could happen should political forces in place in our actual government act out their larger and more extreme goals, experienced similar success. It is worth noting, however, that these popular narratives largely tell the stories of white, cisgender, woman-identified people who read as heterosexual; furthermore, it is almost exclusively the case that the women at the center of the narratives often hold a significant amount of social and/or economic power.

Students enrolled in women's and gender history courses enter classrooms in institutions of higher learning at the intersection of these social realities: media exposure to the overt subjugation of women's lives and bodily autonomy through social, legal, and political systems along with greater access to popular narratives that recognize, elevate, and celebrate the lives and

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and how this erasure is upheld and perpetuated by authoritative bodies like the Pulitzer Prize committee, "Why the Pulitzer Prize Committee Keeps Ignoring Women's History," *The Washington Post*, April 13, 2018, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2018/04/13/why-the-pulitzer-committee-keeps-ignoring-womens-history/?utm\\_term=.5d9bfd6e3fcd](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2018/04/13/why-the-pulitzer-committee-keeps-ignoring-womens-history/?utm_term=.5d9bfd6e3fcd); "2018 Pulitzer Prizes," The Pulitzer Prizes, accessed January 15, 2019, <http://www.pulitzer.org/prize-winners-by-year/2018>.

96. "Hidden Figures (2016): Awards," IMDb, accessed May 8, 2019, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4846340/awards>; Andrew R. Chow, "Octavia Spencer to Star in 'Madam C.J. Walker' on Netflix," *The New York Times*, July 30, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/30/arts/television/octavia-spencer-madam-cj-walker-netflix.html>.

contributions of women-identified people (whether real or fictional). Grappling with this matrix of influence and representation, and asking students to engage in critical reflection and inquiry, surely complicates spaces of teaching and learning for an instructor of women's and gender history. In the chapter that follows, I offer an account of how I navigated this complex intersection and did so through and with the use of object-based teaching and learning. I emphasize why object-based teaching and learning is uniquely suited to address the intersection I point out. I created an innovative course curriculum by combining traditional course components, such as a textbook and individual and group assignments, with a scaffolded, semester-long project that required students to research and create knowledge using object-centric methods. Students in HIST 243: History of Women in American Society at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) created *The Supper Club*, a final project that was part research project and part art installation. The course, and final project especially, called them to consider historical authority and their own (emerging) positions of authority within the classroom, academia, and wider world.

Drawing from the lives of Wisconsin women, both historical and contemporaneous, and inspired by materials from the Archives, Digital Collection, and Special Collections at UWM, as well as the collections of Jewish Museum Milwaukee and the Wisconsin Museum of Quilts and Fiber Arts, students in History of Women in American Society created *The Supper Club*, a local re-imagining of Judy Chicago's foundational work of feminist art, *The Dinner Party*.<sup>97</sup> Students

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97. As a group and near the end of the semester, members of History of Women in American Society named the collective final project *The Supper Club* (with the suggestion that it be pronounced sup-HER club). Along with fish fries, beer, and cheese curds, supper clubs have long been a culinary and cultural staple in Wisconsin. For a primer on what the supper club is and what a patron can expect after entering its doors, see Ann Christenson, "Anatomy of a Wisconsin Supper Club," *Milwaukee Magazine*, January 26, 2018, <https://www.milwaukeeemag.com/anatomy-of-a-wisconsin-supper-club/>. A number of books,

completed *The Supper Club* as the final project for the course based on scaffolded assignments during the course of the sixteen-week term. The assignments facilitated their encounters with primary sources, objects, texts, archives and archivists. The project also asked them to engage in skill-building themselves, often with the assistance of friends and family members, individuals not often asked to share specialized or expert knowledge within an academic context. In *The Supper Club*, the students and instructor figure women in Wisconsin's history – many of whom are missing from or for whom only traces exist in the historical record – as historical subjects with a seat at the table. This final project and end-of-term gallery show also positioned the students as historians. They became individuals with expert knowledge of the lives of these Wisconsin women as well as of the crafting methods and techniques particular to their subjects' time, location, and status.

In what follows, I will continue my explanation of *The Supper Club* and its creation, providing further context about the course itself, including information about assignments that helped prepare students to take on the intensive object-based research and creation required of them for the final assignment. Presenting information about course design, intended learning outcomes, and teaching and learning reflections, I emphasize the role that authority played: how it was created, maintained, and fulfills the goals of engaged pedagogy by contributing to the development of well-being within the higher education humanities classroom.<sup>98</sup>

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cookbooks, and documentaries provide more context: see, Ron Faiola, *Wisconsin Supper Clubs: Another Round*, 6th ed. (Agate Midway, 2016); Mary Bergin, *Wisconsin Supper Club Cookbook: Iconic Fare and Nostalgia from Landmark Eateries* (Guilford, Connecticut, Globe Pequot Press: 2015).

98. Here, I draw from bell hooks' conception of engaged pedagogy, an approach to teaching and learning that emphasizes well-being for students and instructors alike, see bell hooks, "Engaged Pedagogy," *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, (New York: Routledge, 1994), 13-22.

## **Discussion: Authority and Feminism**

Authority is addressed by feminists, historians, women's historians, and feminist historians. In addition, defining and exploring what it means to be authoritative or an authority was central to my experience developing and teaching the course under consideration. In the discussion that follows, I address authority as it manifests itself in a multitude of contexts and as experienced via different positions within academia, and how that comes to bear on the classroom. In the conclusion to this chapter, I discuss ways in which that authority extended outside of the confines of the classroom in this course, and framed an exchange of knowledge and skills that transversed home and academia. This observation offers us an opportunity to explore the impact of engaged pedagogy, noting that efforts to create and maintain well-being for teachers and learners within the classroom can have impacts beyond it.

Occupying a position of authority implies having voice. Cultural notions of authority indicate that we listen to authority figures, we value their insight, and we allow what they have to say to shape our understanding of what is true and worthy of our time and attention. In a patriarchal culture like our own, this often means that we elevate as authority those who identify (or are identified as) white, male, educated, of means, and Christian. Feminist scholarship both identifies this cultural tendency and critiques typical patterns of assigning and understanding authority, connecting issues of authority with the possibility of having and giving voice, as well as the tendency to silence those not conventionally understood as "authorities." Importantly, feminist scholars formulate means of knowledge production that aim to restore and give voice to those traditionally silenced by patriarchal, often positivistic, epistemologies. Below, I engage in a brief review of literature in order to further situate the conclusions I draw regarding authority and its corollary, voice and silence.

Since the 1980s, feminist theorists have engaged in substantial discussions regarding voice and silence, both in the historical record and within the academy, as they relate to representations of gender. Central questions interrogate who, historically, has been allowed voice and whose voices have been deemed valid within the academy, both past and present. The feminist critiques and reflexive accounts surveyed below suggest that one group or individual asserting their voice often comes at the cost of silencing another.<sup>99</sup> Understood in this way, voice and silence become voicing and silencing – processes to be enacted. Feminist theory offers more than a framework for analysis and critique, a means for identifying the presence of gaps and silences and speculating about the politics of their origin. Feminist theory also provides ways of moving forward – methods and approaches for addressing silences and silencing – resulting in the production of feminist knowledge, a way of giving voice.

In 1987, feminist philosopher Sandra Harding reflected on methods of inquiry, measuring the effect of feminism (or feminisms) on the production of knowledge. She suggested, “feminists have argued that traditional epistemologies, whether intentionally or unintentionally, systematically exclude the possibility that women could be ‘knowers’ or *agents of knowledge*; they claim that the voice of science is a masculine one; that history is written from only the point of view of men; that the subject of a traditional sociological sentence is always assumed to be a

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99. It strikes me that the relationship I draw between voice and silence is parallel to the relationship between systems of privilege and oppression. The paradigm that characterizes the relationship between voice:silence and privilege:oppression is the bifurcation that sets in opposition and casts as counterparts the normative/dominant and the marginalized. Hassel and Launius provide a clear definition of privilege that characterizes how this relationship is contingent: “privilege can be defined as benefits, advantages, and power that accrue to members of a dominant group as a result of the oppression of the marginalized group,” Holly Hassel and Christine Launius, *Threshold Concepts in Women’s and Gender Studies: Ways of Seeing, Thinking, and Knowing* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 74.



man.”<sup>100</sup> In other words, feminist critiques of traditional means of positivist knowledge production indicate that the male voice is centralized, even naturalized, and is singularly authoritative. The possibility for women to figure as actors and creators has been systematically silenced by patriarchal epistemology and methods. Emerging from feminist critiques of traditional (read: androcentric and informed by patriarchal epistemology/ies) modes of knowledge production is a path forward, Harding indicates: the possibility for women to position themselves as knowers, as feminists “have proposed alternative theories of knowledge that legitimate women and knowers.” A central feature of this production of feminist knowledge is making women’s experiences central. In *The Science Question in Feminism*, Harding lays out standpoint theory, a framework for a way of knowing which relies on the contextualization of individual identities and investigates how these intersecting identities effect knowledge production and accompanying claims of power and authority. In response, Donna Haraway presents the idea of situated knowledges (1988), which calls for further contextualization and posits that all knowledge claims are partial.<sup>101</sup> Both of these texts critique traditional ways of knowing and creating knowledge and are responses to a call for an ‘objective’ feminist method.

As other feminists have rightly pointed out, the category “woman” is not a homogenous entity and not all women’s lives and experiences have figured in or counted in the production of feminist knowledge. Just as women as a group have not figured as actors or agents of knowledge by androcentric methods, whole groups have been disregarded at the hand of white, western

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100. Sandra Harding, “Introduction: Is There a Feminist Method?” in *Feminism and Methodology: Social Sciences Issues*, ed. Sandra Harding (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1987), 3.

101. Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1986) 3; Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” *Feminist Studies* 14 (1988): 575-599.

feminists, a critique that feminists of color and non-western feminists began to make in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The categories used by early thinkers on these issues, such as white, feminist of color, western, or nonwestern, later themselves became objects of feminist critique, but were important categories of self-identification and indicate how critical a role reflexivity plays in the production of feminist knowledge. However, there may be instances in which highlighting a particular aspect of identity, like “woman,” is a politically necessary move, as post-colonial and feminist theorist Gayatri Spivak first points out in “Can the Subaltern Speak.” Strategic essentialism, as proposed by Spivak<sup>102</sup>, is a useful tool for critically engaging from a single aspect of one’s identity, a position of identification that becomes especially salient in a given context. Spivak’s point then was to posit that at times, it becomes necessary to point to a singular aspect of identity, one that serves to galvanize, in order to critique political and social systems that oppress, deny, and silence.<sup>103</sup> By elevating a particular aspect of identity and then focusing on how one’s experience of the world is shaped by identification in this way, Spivak suggests that employing strategic essentialism can allow one to speak from a place of authority.

Taking an intersectional approach - one that considers how our identities come to bear, casting us into relationships of power, privilege, and oppression - sociologist Patricia Hill Collins takes care to investigate the difference that differences of gender, race, and class makes in practices of knowledge-making and authority-granting.<sup>104</sup> Speaking as an “outsider within” sociology and

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102. Though she later disavowed this approach to examining identity, strategic essentialism is an important step in the development of both post-colonial and queer theory.

103. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea*, ed. Rosalind C. Morris (New York, Columbia University Press, 2010): 21-78.

104. For a more detailed discussion of intersectionality and how it comes to bear on my project, see the section “Identity” in “Chapter 4, Memory Keepers: Objects in a Women’s and Gender Studies Classroom.”

(hegemonic, white) feminism, Collins uses reflexivity as a tool in the production of black feminist knowledge. This knowledge is created in response to the ways in which the experiences of black women, both as individuals and as a group, are routinely silenced by patriarchal and androcentric as well as white, middle-class, western feminist modes of knowledge production. Though not seeking to recast the continued oppression and silencing of black women as a positive, Collins suggests that it is possible for black women to benefit from their outsider status, as this gives them an epistemic advantage that allows insight about the processes of voicing and silencing – what it means to be silenced and then voice yourself upon developing the consciousness that as an individual or because of your membership in a group, you have been silenced. For Collins, writing is a vehicle for authority, a means to highlight the fact that individual experiences are political and personal acts meant to challenge and upend stereotypes set to contain, disempower, and silence black women as a group.<sup>105</sup> Therefore, there are theoretical and critical precedents modeling how questions of authority and authority-making can be fruitfully investigated along a single axis of identity, as Spivak suggests, or from an intersectional lens, as Collins illustrates. Both approaches to understanding authority are significant as I present and reflect in this chapter, and I will continue this conversation in the conclusion. At the hands of various theorists and writers, both a strategic essentialist and intersectional approach have been important when writing women’s and gender history.

Informed by feminist theory, which itself is expanded by its conjunction with other critical theories that address multiple forms of oppression, women’s and gender history has challenged ways of knowing that are standard or expected within the discipline. Authoritative historical

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105. Patricia Hill Collins, “Learning From the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought,” *Social Problems* 33 (1986): 14-32.

narratives and means of knowledge production traditionally privilege the white man-identified experience and voice. As a by-product of this authority, these accounts and epistemologies are often seen as both primary and naturalized. The analytical power that feminist theory brings to the subversive pursuits that call into question long-held disciplinary assumptions has allowed for wide and varied critique of the ways in which historical knowledge is produced. Rising from critique, feminist methodologies in women's and gender history offer possibilities for the production of new knowledge as well as new opportunities for asserting oneself as a knower and producer of history - an authority.

Part and parcel of the feminist movement, the field of women's and gender history initially responded to how the narratives of women-identified and other marginalized peoples were not present in (conventional) historical accounts. Recuperative efforts to reinsert people occupying these identities, and initially just those we recognized as women, often resulted in "add-and-stir" historical accounts. Meaning, the traditional framework of progress and familiar narratives that centered political and colonizing exploits were not called into question. Rather, historians constructed or contributed to accounts of how women-identified people contributed to already-established events. It's as though people of all identities played their parts on the stage of history and beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, a narrow representative population, usually white and women-identified people, now had their microphones and spotlights turned on, so the audience could now see and hear these actors along with the men of power and colonized men they were used to watching. Still playing their roles in the dark and without their voices amplified for the audience, women of color, queer people, and those occupying other marginalized identities, gradually, though infrequently, became visible as they passed through

the spotlight of visible actors. Even more infrequently, their voices became audible as they shared stage space even more proximal to the hot-mic-ed actors.

Explicitly positioning history writing as a form of critique, historian Joan Scott outlines the ways in which history has grappled with claims of objectivity in knowledge creation. For the discipline of history, critique has often functioned as a means of voicing elements that were previously not considered, or were presupposed or assumed. In Scott's assessment, aiming history's narrative goals toward critique widens the scope of topics, identities, and subject material to be considered. She suggests that topics like "women, workers, fever, incest" or categories such as "gender, race, [and] class," which have gone unaddressed under the presumption that they are either "not usually considered 'historical'...[are] self-evident...[or] outside of time" should be investigated through materials in the archive because such critique and investigation serves the interests of history. Such research would widen history's scope: "it opens doors to futures we might not otherwise have been able to imagine and, in doing so, gives us ever more material for the writing of history."<sup>106</sup> The process of critique exposes what was left silenced or made silent; investigating these silences is then not just a subversive or reclaimatory act, but a boon to the discipline.<sup>107</sup>

Scott makes this call to writers, researchers, and practitioners within the discipline of history - those traditionally understood to serve as figures of authority. This call is a subversive

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106. Joan Scott, "History-Writing as Critique," in *Manifestos for History*, eds. Keith Jenkins, Sue Morgan, and Alum Munslow (New York: Routledge, 2007), 35.

107. Further explaining the ways in which critique as Scott proposes can play out, and elucidating the effects of the analytical power offered by a feminist theory-informed approach, social anthropologist and historian Pothiti Hantzaroula describes the role of feminist historiography as that which challenges teleologies, master narratives, positivism, androcentrism, the subjectivity and positionality of the writer, a perceived hierarchy of source material, the nature of the archive, and the reification of the domestic, see Pothiti Hantzaroula, "Gender History and the Transformation of the Poetics of Historical Knowledge." *Historien* 10 (2010).

one, in that Scott asks those who create historical knowledge to think about who and what have typically served as the subject of (authoritative) historical narratives. Multiple iterations of authority and who or what is authoritative must be parsed out.

Scott's chapter touches on two distinct facets of authority that come to bear on my own research and teaching, especially within the context of curriculum development for History of Women in American Society. First, occupying a position of authority, being an "authority" (in the nominative), allows a researcher/writer the power to give voice or to silence. The account itself, the historical narrative, can be deemed an "authoritative account," a title that can confer both recognition and authority on the writer or writers of said account. Thus, authority in the nominative and authoritative in the descriptive sense are linked. How a person comes to occupy a position of authority is often linked to social practices that award (unearned) privilege; Spivak and Collins illuminate and contest these practices, offering routes of alternate ways of knowing and creating knowledge. Building from this epistemological shift, Scott suggests that historians can give voice to topics and identities that have gone unaddressed. By virtue of their presence - filling formerly unaddressed gaps and silences in the historical record - these narratives gain some measure of authority. To be sure, simply creating a historical account does not necessarily mean that it is understood as authoritative; this process is far more nebulous and contested, with privileged categories of identity often mapping onto and legitimizing the writers of accounts and in relation, the accounts and narratives themselves.

Processes of occupying a position of authority and creating an authoritative account are messy and ultimately subject to forces that create other social constructions. Questions of authority are ones I ask of myself and my students (and now, of my readers). My own reflections on and critical engagement with authority significantly informed my curriculum development for History

of Women in American Society. In the course, I sought to both explicitly recognize and subvert my own authority within the classroom, position students - with the intent that they would position themselves - as authorities both within and outside of the classroom, and encourage all teachers and learners associated with the course and its outcomes to critically engage with authority (and all the ways it manifests), themselves.

### **Designing a Women's History Course**

As I noted in the opening section, *The Supper Club* was the final course project for HIST 243: History of Women in American Society, a course I was asked to teach only several weeks before the semester began. This was my first semester after successfully completing my preliminary exams and, without coursework to fill my time as well as out of economic necessity, I took on a full teaching load. The course had been taught in a relatively static form for nearly a decade and I inherited a syllabus and reading list from the former instructor, who had also originally developed the course. Responding to the authority I gave the previous instructor (the person, I am told, who developed the course) I dutifully ordered copies of the indicated texts and set to review the syllabus to develop assignments and activities to fill the semester. It may have been days or it may have been hours later, but I quickly decided that the structure of the course as handed down to me would not fit with my own goals for the course or with my own inclinations as a feminist teacher. I was given a lecture-heavy course outline, something I simply was not prepared to do given my relative lack of an exhaustive knowledge of the field and the mere days I would have to prepare my lectures. Instead, I hoped to facilitate a classroom that relied on discussion and classroom interrogation of the content, as presented in the text and supplemental readings. No longer a student, in this first semester as an Associate Lecturer, I

aimed to refine my teaching practice and, thus, to shift my identity within the academic institution.

Thirty-five undergraduate students and one auditor filled the rows of desks in the sunlit hallway of a classroom. Nearly all of the students were women-identified<sup>108</sup> and no student claimed a history major. In fact, the most popular majors in the course were in the Social Sciences (psychology, political science, criminal justice, and social work), with 15/35 students; or Health Sciences (nursing, general health science, and biomedical science), with 9/35 students. The remaining students studied art (2), journalism (2), liberal arts (1), women's and gender studies (3), and business (1); two students were undecided as to major.<sup>109</sup> History of Women in American Society fulfills a General Education Requirement (GER), of which a certain number and type (in the social sciences or humanities) are required for graduation at UWM. Curriculum requirements for particular schools, including the School of Nursing, require that students take a history course, explaining the relatively high number of students studying health sciences.<sup>110</sup> Anecdotally, I can report that most students enrolled in the course to fill this aforementioned requirement; few, if any, disclosed that the course was an opportunity to explore a topic they were passionate about or wanted to pursue as part of their larger career goals. Student major demographics and perceived relative interest in the course material were both details I

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108. This information was self-disclosed and I report no official statistics here, as UWM did not/does not offer a way for students to indicate their gender identity on official forms, instead mandating that students report their assigned sex at birth.

109. This demographic information is provided via PAWS, the system UWM uses for course registration.

110. See, "L&S Breadth Requirement Course List," College of Letters and Science, accessed May 8, 2019, <https://uwm.edu/letters-science/advising/degree-requirements/ls-breadth-requirement-course-list/>; "Undergraduate Student Handbook," University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, College of Nursing, accessed May 8, 2019, <https://uwm.edu/nursing/wp-content/uploads/sites/287/2018/08/UWM-College-of-Nursing-Undergraduate-Handbook-2018-2019-FINAL.pdf>.



considered carefully as I set to work in arranging the syllabus and course schedule. I wanted to honor the fact that students came from diverse backgrounds, and not necessarily with knowledge or even an interest in the content to be presented. However, it was the far larger piece of course development — determining the methods of content delivery, my style of class facilitation, assignment expectations, and intended learning outcomes — where I anticipated push-back or, more likely, simply a lack of student participation or engagement. With these possible restrictions in mind, I aimed to be explicit about my expectations, describing the course on the first page of the course syllabus (Appendix A).

Just below the course description, I outlined a modest list of course goals. The goals reflected my experience with the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in History (HistorySoTL or SoTL in History).<sup>111</sup> In the past ten years, teacher-scholars in the field have offered up several paradigms for teaching and learning. These resources focus specifically on helping students acquire so-called “disciplinary habits of mind,” or practices valued and utilized by practicing historians, so that they, too, can “think historically.”<sup>112</sup> A discussion of the body of scholarship that supports these associated resources can be found within “Chapter 2: Review of Literature.” As I also discuss there, central to my approach to facilitating student development of these skills

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111. There is no clear, established usage for noting contributions to SoTL that address teaching and learning in the history classroom, and I have seen both usages. Notably, HistorySOTL is the name of the organization for the International Society for the Scholarship in Teaching and Learning, “HistorySOTL,” Indiana University, accessed May 8, 2019, <http://www.indiana.edu/~histsotl/blog/>.

112. See “Tuning the History Discipline in the United States,” American Historical Association, accessed May 9, 2019, <https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/tuning-the-history-discipline>; Andrews and Burke, “What Does It Mean to Think Historically?”; Lendol Calder and Tracy Steffes, “Measuring College Learning in History,” in *Improving Quality in American Higher Education: Learning Outcomes and Assessments for the 21st Century*, eds. Richard Arum, Josipa Roska, and Amanda Cook (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2016), 37-86.

is object-based teaching and learning. This approach, I contend, also responds to the “material turn” in the discipline of history: if educators seek to help students understand and then do the work of historians, then they must include object-based teaching and research. As I surveyed available women’s and gender history texts to adopt for this course, primary to my consideration was finding a text that supported my initiative to teach through and with material culture.

### *Choosing a Text Book*

I consulted with my advisor and searched text book publishing websites and came up with a short list of women’s and gender history textbooks that figured objects as valid and central points of entry into the subject matter; the list, unsurprisingly, was brief. Ultimately, I settled on *Through Women’s Eyes: An American History with Documents* (4th edition) by Ellen DuBois and Lynn Dumenil. I chose this text because it not only figured objects as valid forms of source material, but it also provided a comprehensive explanation of *why* considering objects mattered, intended to be easily understood by students and teachers alike. The formatting and development of assignments, activities, and a final project flowed from this significant shift, just weeks before the start of the semester. *Through Women’s Eyes* is formatted in a way that is familiar to many teachers and learners: it is organized chronologically, presents historical content and narratives, contextualizes the content by framing the narratives within larger contexts, and recursively pursues themes within that chronology over the series of chapters.

In the Instructor Preface, DuBois and Dumenil explain their goals for the text, being careful to note how the goals have changed and expanded over the four (and now five) editions of the text. They state, “our original goal was to create a U.S. women’s history that combined an inclusive and diverse narrative with primary-document and visual-source essays - a comprehensive resource to aid instructors and encourage student engagement and analysis.”

They go on to discuss that this original goal, one that carefully recognizes how the mode of delivery of course content (here, through documentary and visual primary sources) necessarily impacts learning outcomes, that is, students' developed ability to critically engage with the presented content. Building upon the initial goal they set out, DuBois and Dumenil share that the text, in its present form, is also designed to "present women's history as both a compelling story and an ongoing exploration."<sup>113</sup> With this statement, the writers point to two significant ways in which the doing of women's and gender history – the exploration of primary sources to come to new and sometimes challenging conclusions – has bearing on the field of history as a whole.

First is the simple statement that the lives of women-identified people are interesting and worthy of space and time in our classrooms, whether they are women's and/or gender history classrooms or otherwise. Decades, nay, centuries, of history textbooks and accounts tell us otherwise, whether explicitly or implicitly. For the students who enter our history classrooms primed for and expecting tales of heroism and progress, convincing them that lives of women-identified people (and the lives of all people not white, man-identified, and powerful) are worthy of our time, investigation, and curiosity can be a tall order in that it calls them to evaluate what makes a historical account compelling in the first place. Often, what makes a story compelling is subjective and a product of social conditioning. If exhibiting traditional ideals of masculinity and valor in military settings is considered the highest form of patriotism and contribution to the state of our nation, and if this narrative is not only centered in history texts and popular or fictionalized accounts, but is also held in the highest regard by society in general, then we women's and gender historians are likely to have a hard time convincing our students that

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113. DuBois and Dumenil, *Through Women's Eyes*, v; a fifth edition of the text was published in 2019.

investigating the lives of U.S. women is not only worth our time, but is an interesting topic or path of study in its own right. This is true even if they have elected to take our class. While DuBois and Dumenil don't offer any argument explaining why they believe the narrative of U.S. women's history that they present is so compelling, I can share that I thoroughly enjoyed my time spent reading the text and despite its relatively lengthy chapters (about sixty pages in each of the twelve chapters), students never complained that the chapter per week reading schedule was too onerous. So the goal of presenting women's and gender history as a compelling story is one the text seems to have met.

The second part of DuBois and Dumenil's goal for their text - that it is part of and promotes U.S. women's history as an ongoing investigation - undergirds how women's and gender historians conceive of the field itself and our work in it. Though it is widely understood within the discipline of history as a whole that researching and writing history is a continuous and collective effort on the part of all historians, this is not always something we discuss explicitly with students within our classrooms. Many, if not most, of our students arrive in our classrooms with the assumption that U.S. History is written, somehow fixed, or collectively understood to follow certain narratives or frameworks. A function of teaching and learning in history, then, must be to compel students to realize the constructedness - and *ongoing* construction - of historical narratives as a whole. Particular to women's and gender history is helping students understand context and the motivations that underlie the received knowledge many of us are so comfortable with: the political and social forces that dictate who is seen as a worthy subject of U.S. History. Making clear the urgency of DuBois and Dumenil's second goal, contributing to the project of women's history, is of particular importance in the women's and gender history classroom, as it is related to issues of representation, diversity, and inclusion.

With white, androcentric, and (often) heteronormative narratives filling the pages of so many U.S. History textbooks, our contemporary moment calls for an ongoing investigation of those formerly silenced, marginalized, or otherwise ignored - those figures missing from our received narratives.

Including documentary and visual sources, I believe, as the text does, helps fulfill this goal. As students learn to engage in primary source research and do the work of historians, they come to create historical narratives and understandings themselves. On the backside of the front cover of the textbook, DuBois and Dumenil provide a handy guide for students. Marked with bold print and a large font size, when students lift the front cover of the text, they are immediately briefed on how historians treat primary sources. An explanatory statement follows the bold declaration “HOW TO ANALYZE PRIMARY SOURCES,” encouraging students that when they encounter primary sources, there are key questions that historians, themselves now included, must ask. Two sub-headings follow, each with a list of bullet-pointed questions. The headings distinguish “written document[s]” from “visual source[s],” suggesting separate questions to consider of each, thereby creating two strictly-defined categories.<sup>114</sup> A point central to my adopting it, the course text *Through Women’s Eyes* contains a section following each chapter that contains a selection of primary source material that consists of both written documents and visual sources, as categorized by the writers of the text. As discussed earlier, I chose the text because it not only included maps, photographs, images of objects, and primary

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114. It is important to note that nowhere in this guide is the suggestion that primary sources could exist outside, or even across, these categories. Because I approached teaching and learning in this course from a material culture theory-informed perspective, questions about subverting categories and labels ascribed to primary source material were things I routinely asked my students. Often these questions manifested in class discussions, usually during a Discussion Leader Group presentation (an assignment that will be discussed later in this chapter), and not from specific prompts or assignments I gave the students.

source documentary evidence within the text but especially because these inclusions were explicit. The pages of photographs, drawings, maps, etc. are edged in a different color, marking them as distinct from the pages of historical narrative. A number of pages at the beginning of this section provide a brief explanation of the primary sources to follow and discuss how the documents, images, etc. relate to the narrative presented in the body of the chapter.

For example, the primary sources section that follows the text's first chapter (titled "America in the World: to 1650") contains only images. The set of primary sources is titled "European Images of Native American Women" and contains nine representations of two-dimensional visual sources. Aside from the textbook writers' descriptive text that provides context and scaffolding, and the minute traces of descriptive text the artist included in several of the images, students are not presented with documentary sources in this chapter. While the visual sources therein, created by European colonists, serve a didactic function and are meant to represent the lives, habits, and practices of Native American women for a European audience, they are drawn, illustrated, or printed with great skill and could easily be called "art." The primary source section for this chapter runs ten pages and a combination of contextualizing narrative and reproductions of the selected visual sources fills nearly every page so that as teachers and learners read the narrative they can immediately consider a visual source. This running narrative also asks readers to analyze and critically engage the visual sources at hand, calling them to consider, "what does this drawing and description suggest about the work patterns of Iroquois women" and "what are the similarities and differences with [this drawing] and [another visual source]?"<sup>115</sup> These questions that appear in the narrative urge students to consider the visual images more closely and to draw conclusions about the lives, habits, and

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115. DuBois and Dumenil, *Through Women's Eyes*, 36.

values of the subjects depicted. Additionally, the end of the primary source section poses a handful of questions for analysis, asking students to consider the body of primary source evidence and make generalized assessments. For example, chapter one includes the following question for analysis: “this visual essay features European images of early Native American women and cautions that we must ‘read’ these images carefully in using them to understand indigenous women’s lives. What limitations do these images have as historical sources?”<sup>116</sup> Here, I believe, the textbook makes an important contribution to teaching and learning with visual sources: it does not treat them as mere illustrations of the text, but as entry points to further investigation, opportunities to ask questions that cannot be asked of texts, offering the potential to come to new and exciting conclusions. My own approach to teaching and learning with visual sources (and objects, in general) similarly resists the object/image-as-illustration paradigm. Rooted in material culture theory, it facilitates the development of new ways of asking questions and new ways of knowing.

As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, I developed curriculum for and taught History of Women in American Society immediately following my preliminary exams. As a dissertator now engaged in conducting research, I could now begin my work investigating both why and how to incorporate objects and object-based teaching and learning in the higher education humanities classroom. With a textbook in hand to support this mission, I set about developing curriculum for the course. Along with many of my students, I made my first attempt at incorporating objects in practices of teaching and learning.

### **Learning to Interrogate Objects**

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116. DuBois and Dumenil, *Through Women’s Eyes*, 43.

Like many other instructors, I spent the first class meeting discussing my vision and goals for the course. Overwhelmed by the start of a new academic semester, the students listened to the information I delivered, asking few questions the many times I prompted them to make requests for clarification. I directed students to complete two readings the first week of class. For our second class meeting, students read “Introduction for Students” from *Through Women’s Eyes*, , as well as Joan Scott’s “Women’s History” from *Gender and the Politics of History*. I selected these readings to foreground the use of objects in the classroom as well as to introduce students to the idea that history is political, a creation, and that women-identified people had not always been recognized as historical actors.<sup>117</sup>

Along with the course textbook, I developed a series of assignments meant to ease students into a mode of teaching and learning that was likely brand new for them, a mode that asked them to see visual sources and image reproductions of objects as more than just useful illustrations of ideas presented in the textbook. In addition to the final course project that resulted in the creation of *The Supper Club*, students completed a number of other assignments, including: reading responses that followed each of the nine assigned chapters; leading a class session as part of a discussion leader group; several guided reading and watching worksheets; and various in-class reflection and discussion activities.

To help students learn from and with their classmates, and through and with the primary sources in the chapter addendums, I created the Discussion Leader Group (DLG) assignment in which a small group of students served as leaders of the whole-class discussion. This assignment

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117. Scott’s arguments would bookend the entire course neatly; students revisited a guided reading worksheet they completed for this first week of class discussion as we co-created an artists’ statement for *The Supper Club* in the final weeks of the semester. This was an element I did not anticipate as I assigned the reading and created the guided reading worksheet.



functioned to develop students' critical analysis skills. Additionally, I developed this DLG assignment to prepare students for the final project, which would call them to engage in primary source research, investigating written documents, visual sources, and, at times, physical objects. The DLG assignment asked students to hone their critical analysis, primary source research, and collaboration skills.

For the assignment that asked students to undertake their first attempt at interrogating visual primary source material, a practice in which no student had explicit training, I knew that I would need to make other aspects of the assignment relatively simple for the students to approach. The textbook is a familiar vehicle of knowledge for students; from our earliest years in academic settings, we are conditioned to believe that, in the classroom, we receive historical knowledge from textbooks. Feeling the binding crack as we flip the laminated cardboard cover, sections of glossy pages slipping under our fingers, we open a textbook, entering a porthole to receive objective and truthful knowledge of our past. Similarly familiar, an assignment requiring small group work is one that most students are well-acquainted with. While many of us teachers and learners have mixed feelings about small group work, either having been made to complete the lion's share on our own as a classmate "missed a message" or "thought they were responsible for another section," interrogating visual images in small groups provides a sounding board. Anecdotally, students reported to me that as they developed their discussion questions and worked their way through the bullet-pointed presentation guidelines in the assignment sheet, they engaged in active and critical discussion with one another. More than just planning out which student would present a particular part or aspect of the required material, preparing for the DLG presentations required students to do the work of primary source research as well as synthesis before they would present this to the class.

In small groups of four to six, students collaborated to present as DLGs. Each group was assigned a different chapter from the text book and was instructed to choose a selection of two to three images from the primary source section that followed the historical narrative. An assignment sheet, available in Appendix B, provided students with guidelines and expectations, along with a rubric that explained how I would evaluate their presentations, worth ten percent of their final course grade. The assignment sheet instructed them:

This assignment focuses on your reading and investigation of the visual and documentary sources provided at the end of every chapter. Along with your group members, you will choose 2-3 sources from the chapter, put them in conversation, contextualize these sources within the historical narrative of the chapter, pose discussion questions to your classmates, and facilitate the ensuing conversation. The purpose of this assignment is to raise the level of our class conversations by assuring that a significant portion of the class have given extra, careful thought to the primary source materials and what we might learn from them.

During their presentations, students typically followed the order of the Presentation Guidelines, outlined in the DLG assignment sheet. The guidelines instructed students to complete, address, consider, and facilitate class discussion based on points that I carefully outlined (again, refer to Appendix B), on which they would also be evaluated. These points helped students build a historical argument over the course of their presentation. First, they provided summary and analysis of each chosen source. Then, they put those sources in conversation with each other and with the received narrative from the body of the corollary textbook chapter (a secondary source). Here, they could pursue questions like the ones posed in the running narrative of the primary source section, asking members of the classroom to consider “what are the similarities and differences with [the selected sources]?”<sup>118</sup> This is where the work

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118. This is a question asked in the “Primary Sources” section of chapter one, DuBois and Dumenil, *Through Women’s Eyes*, 36.

of critical analysis and production of new historical narratives began - where students began to be positioned as (and positioned themselves) as historians.

For almost the entirety of a seventy five-minute class meeting, the small student groups led discussion, with the room darkened so images were visible on the projector. From the back of the classroom, I observed students engaged in active interrogation and conversation with one another. I purposefully positioned myself in the back of the classroom, allowing the presenting students the physical space at the front of the classroom: a space usually reserved for the instructor, a space that ascribes authority. Often, I noticed that presenting students would look to me for encouragement and affirmation as they began leading the class period. Eventually, their gaze and attention shifted to their classmates, especially as the students presented the discussion questions they were required to develop for this assignment. Only at the end did I join the classroom discussion, asking students to engage in some meta-analysis and posit, in the case of the chapter and sources they selected, what the importance of considering a body of visual primary sources and objects was, instead of simply relying on the written narrative, as received from the assigned textbook reading.

The DLG assignment functioned in several ways: it called students to collaborate in small groups; it figured the small groups as resident authorities on the chapter content and the selection of images/objects/non-texts they chose; and it provided the students a chance to practice disciplinary ways of thinking and do the work of historians. Along with a discussion and contextualizing information from the textbook writers, I asked them to begin seeing the visual source material as both valid and historically useful in its own right. Furthermore, I prompted students to reflect on the forms that knowledge takes and how we are called to ascribe value - as well as truthfulness, objectivity, and viability - based on the material form knowledge takes. The

small groups of historian-students led their classmates through several group-created discussion questions, asking themselves and their classmates to look and learn differently and in ways that would prepare them to complete the course's final project.<sup>119</sup> Learning from and with their peers in the DLG assignment prepared students for the kind of object-driven research and creation they would undertake as they worked as individuals on their final project. Therefore, the significant portion of class meeting time spent giving DLG presentations (six full class periods, in total), I felt, was warranted.

In the following section, I will share how students' expanded (and expanding) understanding of object-based teaching, learning, and knowledge production came to bear on the final project, their collective creation of *The Supper Club*.

### **The Supper Club**

Started in 1974 and first exhibited in 1979, Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* seeks to address the repeated erasure of women's achievements from the historical and cultural record. Both anticipating and following calls from pioneering women's historians, it seeks to position women as subjects. It also works to validate the position of women as artists and explores women's artistic legacy. In the introduction *Embroidering our Heritage: The Dinner Party Needlework*, artist and writer Judy Chicago explains that an early motivation to create *The Dinner Party* was a reflection that though she identified as a woman and as an artist and existed

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119. By differently, I mean in a way that many of our students are not asked to learn and produce knowledge. Public education in the United States, the background for many of the students at my academic institution, increasingly succumbs to the pressures of "teaching for the test," whether it be standardized tests or the Advanced Placement tests that are taken by millions of U.S. high school students every year. In 2018, approximately 2.8 million students took about five million AP exams; of the exams offered in thirty-eight subject areas, nearly one million history tests were taken (in European History, U.S. History, and World History), see "Program Summary Report," CollegeBoard, accessed May 8, 2019, <https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/research/2018/Program-Summary-Report-2018.pdf>.

as part of a tradition of women-artists, what troubled her was that she had "...a general lack of knowledge of our heritage as women." Expanding to grapple with this perceived lack of knowledge of self and community, Chicago contends that this significantly contributed to women's "continued oppression."<sup>120</sup> Chicago's effort is more than a recuperative one, which would simply re-insert women into received historical narratives and timelines. Utilizing crafting methods and techniques contemporaneous to the lived contexts of the women-identified subjects, Chicago and her team of makers succeeded in elevating the status of traditionally subjugated (read: feminized) forms of making (think: various forms of needlework including weaving and embroidery) by inserting the products of those making traditions within the walls of an art museum, a space typically reserved for man-identified *artists*. In response, I intended for *The Supper Club* assignment to prompt students to investigate marginalized individuals as well as marginalized ways of making.

*The Supper Club* as reinterpretation follows Chicago's investigation of women's history and traditionally-feminized craft and art production techniques. It also takes Chicago's project as a model for collaboration. Chicago recognizes the importance of informal communities of support: clusters of women who offered encouragement and information to one another. Members of the class found themselves moving this legacy of collaboration and community-building forward. The success of the project and the culminating gallery show held in December of 2016 in the Digital Humanities Lab of UWM's Golda Meir Library would not have been possible without the assistance from and collaboration with many people on UWM's campus, including faculty and staff from Golda Meir Library, History, and Women's and Gender Studies.

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120. Judy Chicago, *Embroidering Our Heritage: The Dinner Party Needlework*, (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1980), 8.

Additionally, students called upon friends, family members, and experts within their home communities to learn and refine the skills necessary to complete aspects of the project. While many students turned to these outside-the-academy collaborators for assistance in sewing, embroidering, or block printing, many also discussed the lives of their chosen subjects, conducting interviews to glean information absent in other archives or engaging in informal conversations around their own dinner tables about the historical and personal significance these figures held.

The multi-staged assignment asked students to create several items using various methods and media and also asked students to produce several elements: written, artistic, and oral. Each student wrote two separate narratives based on research of their chosen subject: a biographical narrative and a research process narrative. In addition to a general assignment sheet for the whole project, I created two mid-point assignments (with separate assignment sheets) to help scaffold student learning and to meter their research and knowledge-creation processes (Appendices C through E). In the first narrative, students presented a brief sketch of the life of their chosen subject, and in the second students reflected on how the research was undertaken – what source materials were reviewed and what form those materials took. In addition, this project had an artistic element: like Chicago, students created a place setting for their subjects, which included a plate and a decorated table runner. Each student received identical ceramic dinner plates (measuring ten-and-a-half inches in diameter) and cotton-linen blend table runners (each runner was hemmed to the same dimensions: twelve inches by sixteen inches). Based on the geographical and temporal context as well as the identities of their subjects, students found that different types of crafting traditions and design motifs were important or popular. They then attempted to replicate the designs, motifs, techniques, and application of materials. Finally,

students gave brief oral presentations on their subject, explaining both the life of the woman-identified person they chose as well as providing evidence and rationale for how and why they created their plates and table runners. These presentations took place during the final class meetings along the three sides of a triangular table planked with repurposed boards that sided a large red barn of a former dairy farm in rural Wisconsin. With space for nine, the table was commissioned and constructed especially for this project. Chicago's table, on permanent display in the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum in New York since 2007, inspired the form and design of *The Supper Club's* table.<sup>121</sup>

Part of the goals of the final assignment was to continue this interaction with objects, culminating in students creating objects as a means of producing and communicating historical knowledge themselves, which also allowed for important conversations about historical authority. This meant spending a good deal of time collaborating with campus and non-campus resources, including Archives and Special Collections at UWM's Golda Meir Library, and several local museums such as the Wisconsin Quilt Museum and the Jewish Museum of Milwaukee; both the students and I found these facilitated lessons to be incredibly enriching. The goal wasn't just to have student work be representative or recuperative, that is, to re-insert women into common or familiar narratives. Students grappled with how historical knowledge is constructed, through what means, and how that knowledge is or is not (traditionally) validated. We frequently discussed that there is hierarchical meaning embedded in calling women's embroidery "craft" and a man's painting "art." Chicago emphasized this point and the students

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121. Dana Micucci, "Feminist Art Gets Place of Pride in Brooklyn," *The New York Times*, April 19, 2007, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/19/arts/19iht-raafemina-28463.html>.

were able to encounter the politics of knowledge production through their own research and production.

Throughout the course, students were asked to interrogate how history is produced. Inherent in that pursuit is the understanding that history does not just exist - it is a *creation*. Together and with our course texts, we examined assumptions regarding what serves as valid historical source material and how non-traditional source material (think photographs, letters, maps, clothing) can be incorporated in historical narratives. Completing *The Supper Club* required students to use primary sources to reconceptualize the variable forms that knowledge takes, assess the relative value often ascribed to these forms, and transmit created knowledge through both written narratives and physical objects. In addition to facilitated museum and archives visits, students also engaged with local makers, friends, and family members to develop the skills necessary for completing several facets of this project. These interactions juxtaposed academic knowledge and knowledge from home and local resources. Through the research and knowledge-creating process, students gradually positioned themselves as authoritative voices of women's history, thereby subverting traditional classroom and academic hierarchies.

At the outset of the semester when I began developing this course and *The Supper Club* assignment, I did not anticipate that the class would host a gallery show. After receiving funding for project supplies and gauging student interest in doing so, the class decided, as a group, to mount a gallery show. Organizing the gallery show posed a massive unknown element: whether students would participate (it was not scheduled during a regular class meeting), if campus and community members would attend, and if the show would be successful. Thus issues of unknowability emerged, which I will discuss at greater length here in Chapter Five: Objects and Public History.



In the final days of the semester, as a class we prepared an artists' statement to share with attendees at our gallery show. We spent a portion of the class period brainstorming and mapped out ideas, concepts, and messages that we wanted visitors of *The Supper Club* gallery show to understand. The students exited the classroom at the end of our class period, still talking excitedly with one another about our upcoming show. As the students filed out, I took several photos of the white board that I had just spent the last thirty minutes scrawling over as we engaged in lively discussion. Over the next several days, I worked to clarify the web of terms and ideas and initiatives we laid out. Referring to the images of these words, I attempted to distill into several bullet points the collective hundreds of hours spent creating, bent over linen and ceramic - gluing, painting, painstakingly reproducing nineteenth century letters by hand; countless conversations over dinner tables, telephone lines, and thigh-to-thigh on a couch, learning from a family member how to embroider; the pain of remembering a long-passed grandparent, whose memory was conjured by the simple act of guiding thread through cloth in a precise chain stitch. Reader, please consult Appendix F and read our co-created Artists' Statement.

In this section, I have just outlined the work required to develop, facilitate, and complete the final project for History of Women in American Society: *The Supper Club*. In order to learn more about students' progress over the course of the semester, assignment outcomes, and teacher and learner reflections, view "Creating *The Supper Club*: Interpreting Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party*," a pedagogical resource and teaching reflection I co-created to accompany the written text of this dissertation.<sup>122</sup> With the generous support of the Chipstone Foundation, and

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122. See Krista Grensavitch and Allain Daigle, "Creating *The Supper Club*: Interpreting Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party*," 2017, video, 6:39, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_eV5G2R6\\_mI&t=3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_eV5G2R6_mI&t=3s).

with filmmaker Allain Daigle, I created “Creating *The Supper Club*” and call it a Teaching and Learning Video Resource. This short video presents a mixture of footage showing in-class instruction, facilitated class visits with local experts and artisans, final presentations, and the culminating gallery show. Commentary is offered through interviews with me (in the role of curriculum developer and instructor), along with several students enrolled in the course. The video provides insight about student experiences with the final project and highlights the importance of collaboration. The video showcases a combination of in-classroom evidence, reflection, and critical analysis - all elements typically included in the “this is how I did this” and “outcomes” section of a written chapter like this one. The Chipstone Foundation hosts the video on its YouTube channel, where the following text provides context for the video resource:

This video traces the production, presentation, and reflection on a final project assigned for History of Women in American Society, a course taught in the Fall of 2016 by Krista Grensavitch at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. For the final project, the students collaborated to create *The Supper Club*, a local reinterpretation of Judy Chicago’s *The Dinner Party*. First exhibited in 1979, *The Dinner Party* seeks to address the repeated erasure of women’s achievements from the historical and cultural record. Following calls from pioneering women’s historians like Gerda Lerner and Joan Scott, it seeks to position women as subjects. It also seeks to validate the position of women as artists and explores women’s artistic legacy. In *The Supper Club*, the students and instructor figure women in Wisconsin’s history – many of whom are missing from or for whom only traces exist in the historical record – as historical subjects with a seat at the table. This reinterpretation follows Chicago’s investigation of women’s history and traditionally-feminized craft and art production techniques. It also takes Chicago’s project as a model for collaboration: Chicago recognizes the importance of informal communities of support - clusters of women who offered encouragement and information to one another. Students, their instructor, academic and artistic resources from UWM and beyond worked together in the production of their final project and a gallery show which introduced their work to the campus community. This video, by Allain Daigle, is meant to provide both a framework and reflective statements for similar kinds of artistic reinterpretations within a higher ed classroom. The Chipstone Foundation was a proud sponsor of this project.

In addition to serving as the “outcomes” section of this chapter, “Creating *The Supper Club*,” along with the other Teaching and Learning Video Resources, are meant to impact a wide audience and remain accessible to a diverse group of teachers and learners. In the case of

“Creating *The Supper Club*,” and “Memory Keepers” (presented in Chapter 4), I do not intend for teachers or learners to exactly replicate the work I do with students and collaborators; rather, I hope that the videos serve as a point of inspiration and pedagogical grounding for others.

Dear readers, please watch “Creating *The Supper Club*” before continuing to the conclusion to this chapter (link and more information provided in Appendix G).

## **Conclusions**

Joan Scott suggests that creating history can serve as a form of critique, a way to identify as well as to throw off the yoke of androcentric, patriarchal narratives and epistemologies. In part, the curriculum for History of Women in American Society served as critique: namely, of traditional practices and ideologies that shape practices of teaching and learning in a university-level history classroom. But I found that taking up Scott’s call to open doors and investigate silences was also generative - it made space for voice and authority in the classroom. I can point to three distinct locations that offered opportunities to students for asserting authority: in the investigation of personal experiences, through the act of writing and creating, and in considering formerly un- or under-considered topics, identities, events, and people.

As they worked through completing assignments associated with *The Supper Club*, students conducted research and responded to writing, making, and speaking prompts that built on these three indicated paths for asserting authority. Along with my commentary, students shared how the three avenues for asserting authority manifested and intersected as they researched and created their final projects in “Creating *The Supper Club*.” To briefly summarize the points, in terms of authority that comes from naming and claiming personal experiences and skills (and their relative value), authority extended outside of the confines of the classroom and framed an exchange of knowledge and skills that transversed home and academia. This point is

of particular importance in an academic institution like UWM, where thirty-nine percent of students identify as first-generation college students, meaning UWM's students often lack the academic preparation that many of their peers have.<sup>123</sup> In researching and creating this final project, knowledge and skills from the home and family context had value. During an in-class work day, students were excited to share the embroidery or embellishing techniques they learned from mothers and grandmothers.<sup>124</sup> While introductory-level courses do not always present final projects or research assignments in which students conduct original research as opportunities for asserting authority, I was careful to emphasize to my students they were doing just that. Still, I don't think that this point resonated with students until the day of the gallery show, when their friends and family members along with UWM staff, faculty, and students, gathered in UWM's Digital Humanities Lab to view their work. I observed visitors to the show engaging with students, asking them about their research process and means of creating the plates and table runners. As I walked around the gallery space and spoke with students and visitors, I saw students engage with others about their work. And as they responded, perhaps they finally began to position themselves as creators and authorities. In many cases, student research and knowledge creation through written text and material form inserted a historical account where there was previously was not one, or where only sparse details existed. Responding to a silence

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123. "U1.0 FAQs," Inclusive Excellence Center, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, accessed May 8, 2019, <https://uwm.edu/inclusiveexcellence/u-1-0-faqs/>; I speak from personal experience as a first-generation college student and can attest to how difficult it can be to have conversations about my own work with friends and family members who did not choose an academic path. I feel an added pressure to be mindful that I do not alienate them (by using academic jargon, for example) or do not minimize or diminish their own career choices in the ways that I discuss my own work and research.

124. In class conversation, I can recall no student sharing that they learned an art or crafting technique or method from a man-identified friend or family member.

and filling an observed gap in the historical record, the students were contributing historians, the de facto authorities on their subjects.

Authority was not centralized in this classroom; this is a fundamental aspect of my teaching practice and my sense of identity as a teacher and learner. While I often facilitated class discussions and activities from the front of the room, a location we've come to regard as the seat of power in the traditional classroom space, this was more to ensure that I was visible to all thirty-six students in the class, as they sat in their fixed rows of tables. My voice was not the only audible one in the classroom and, through assignments and modeling, I worked to create spaces for student voices, especially student voices as authoritative ones. The Discussion Leader Group assignment called students to collaborate in small groups and become "resident experts" on the chapter reading assigned for the week, along with a selection of visual sources from which they guided classroom discussion for nearly a full class period. I further deferred my position of classroom authority by inviting The Supper Club project collaborators to our classroom space. Visits from archivists, education coordinators, and furniture designers and fabricators, positioned each of those individuals as authorities of their given expertise. Often I yielded the front of the classroom or location of attention during these visits. In general, however, I strove for authority to diffuse within our classroom meeting spaces. I intended through the constant modulation of voice and location to emphasize that authority could and did exist in many places, sometimes at once.

Though I could guide students through discussions about the ways in which authority is constructed, relational, and a space they, too, could occupy, how they responded to my facilitation and received Scott's and others' calls to engage in necessary critique was not entirely within my control. Furthermore, the intellectual work I called for the students to complete is not

often asked for in an introductory-level undergraduate classroom; there was a good chance they would reject the vision I had for the course's final project. However, through the process of engaging in personal reflection, writing, making, speaking, and exploring the lives women-identified people without a seat at the table - and presenting their body of work to an engaged and excited audience - students did begin to understand themselves as authorities.

As she discusses in the introduction to *Embroidering Our Heritage*, Judy Chicago's education left her with the understanding that she had no woman-identified role models from history with whom to identify. She was "...educated to think that women had never achieved anything of significance," a fact which allowed her to easily "believe that we were incapable of ever accomplishing important work." Not seeing women-identified people like herself either as successful artists or as people who achieved things that were worthy of social recognition, left Chicago feeling as though her drive to create art would be a waste of time. Though she doesn't elaborate on her initial investigation of women's history, she comments that through her own research, apart from that which was directed by an nationalized education system, she found women-identified people who had ambitions much the same as hers. Chicago's research allowed her to make the powerful conclusion that "women had always made significant contributions to the development of human civilization, but these were consistently ignored, denied, or trivialized."<sup>125</sup> This knowledge allowed Chicago to realize a sense of place in a lineage of women of the past, and with that, a sense of community and shared understanding.

Armed with the knowledge that although women's contributions have been systematically and strategically erased from the historical accounts that many students encounter, Chicago developed an understanding that women did, in fact, make contributions to society. This

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125. Chicago, *Embroidering Our Heritage*, 8-21.

realization proved transformational for Chicago, who now could place herself within a community of creators, a community that transcended both space and time. Clearly, this group identification legitimized and strengthened Chicago's drive to create. It would also allow her to present herself as both an authority on women's history and the history of women's arts and crafts movements and techniques. The authorial drive that Chicago now possessed impacted her sense of self and was a source of personal well-being. She remarks that the lack of women's historical presence and accounts of their accomplishments "caused us [women-identified people] all to have an unconsciously diminished feeling of self-worth and a lack of pride in women."<sup>126</sup>

While I did not turn to *The Dinner Party* or Chicago's reflections and insights about both how and why she fostered its creation as a detailed road map, they certainly had great bearing on my general curriculum design, especially for the final project. Though much has changed about the political and social landscape of the United States since Chicago was in school, there is much that has remained constant. As I noted in the introduction to this chapter, in the present day consumers of news and social media are confronted with daily accounts of misogyny, sexism, and repeated affronts to women's bodily autonomy. At the same time, we are seeing an explosion of both fictional and historical narratives that figure women-identified people (and other marginalized groups) as powerful, capable, and valuable. By my facilitating student development of historical thinking skills with and through object-based teaching and learning, perhaps students can begin to navigate this complex intersection, one that creates so much cognitive dissonance.

The DLG assignment, the final project that led to the creation of *The Supper Club*, and this course in general, asked students to be more than active receptors and reproducers of rote

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126. Chicago, *Embroidering Our Heritage*, 8-21.

knowledge provided by instructor lectures or course reading material: names, dates, “facts,” historical “truths.” Furthermore, it asked them to move beyond developing simple critical thinking skills; students wouldn’t just ask “who, what, where, when, why” questions of the visual sources they chose to present on. Building upon the knowledge of names, dates, and “facts,” and the insights produced by rudimentary critical thinking, students ventured into a third tier, a cognitive location that called them to engage in critical and contextualized analysis, just as Judy Chicago did. Here, students questioned their assumptions (about received historical narratives), in addition to the crucial step of identifying what those assumptions even were, as they evaluated primary source material both in the context of available written accounts as well as in relation to other primary sources. In completing this assignment, and in doing the work of an introductory-level history course, students did the work of historians.



## Chapter 4

### *Memory Keepers: Objects in a Women’s and Gender Studies Classroom*

#### **Object History: WAR Dolls**

Created in the early 1980s, these dolls served an important function in a four-part lesson plan developed by members of Women Against Rape (or, WAR), a Milwaukee-based activist group.<sup>127</sup> Titled *The Four Elements of Prevention: An Abuse and Assault Prevention Program for Children and Adults*, the lesson plan was created by Virginia Ray, a founding member of WAR, in 1983.<sup>128</sup> It was utilized in various contexts within the City of Milwaukee and, notably, within Milwaukee Public School (MPS) classrooms as part of the Human Growth and Development Task Force.<sup>129</sup> The lesson plan, along with WAR, sought to end sexual assault, violence, and rape and saw education as the primary means to ensure systemic change.

Each about three feet tall, Ms. Orange Pumpkin and Mr. Green Johnboy (as they are named in “Volume 1: Awareness,” the first part of the abuse and assault prevention curriculum), were handmade out of bright orange and green cloth, filled with batting, and sport soft yarn hair in a contrasting color. Their faces include finely embroidered features and their expressions are placid, inviting children to explore and play with them. Both Ms. Pumpkin and Mr. Johnboy

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127. Anatomically Correct Instructional Dolls [undated], Boxes 13 and 14, Women Against Rape Records, Archives at Golda Meir Library, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI; “Cut it Out Or We’ll Cut it Off!,” University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Archives, June 28, 2018, <https://uwmarchives.tumblr.com/post/175339560526>.

128. *The Four Elements of Prevention: An Abuse and Assault Prevention Program for Children and Adults* [ca. 1983], Box 6, Women Against Rape Records, Archives at Golda Meir Library, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI.

129. The entire four-part program was piloted at the Milwaukee Boys’ Club Hillside Community Center and was taught by Ms. Lucy Feinberg, MSW. According to the curriculum plan, the children in the pilot course ranged in age from six to thirteen and were educated in classrooms segregated by gender. Feinberg also hosted outreach and educational efforts for the mothers of the children enrolled in the program, “Volume 1: Awareness” [ca. 1983], Box 6, Women Against Rape Records, Archives at Golda Meir Library, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI.

wear purple terry cloth robes with the letters “WAR” emblazoned in sequins across the back. Underneath the robes, buttons, embroidery, and more batting-filled-cloth represent anatomically correct genitalia; according to the lesson plan, teaching children to identify body parts was the “primary method of awareness.”<sup>130</sup>

The dolls discussed here are the second batch of dolls created by members of WAR for use in *The Four Elements of Prevention* program. The first set of dolls, which had dark brown cloth for skin and sported short, curly brown hair, were critiqued as having “stereotype features.” The second set was created to respond to these complaints. Noting this controversy, in a message to program facilitators, Ray explains, “the dolls still have the same features (we used the same face on all dolls) but they do not specifically seem to represent any one race but rather every man & woman and that really is something for the teacher to be aware of and prepare accordingly. Make sure your dolls are done in fantasy skin tones so children get the point that all races are the same under the clothes.”<sup>131</sup>

WAR had aspirations of expanding their community education arm as well as the abuse and assault prevention program. For example, with grant monies, they hoped to “[develop] and [implement] structures to facilitate instruction in MPS,” design a “new sex education curriculum” for MPS, and “involve the survivors of child sexual assault, abuse, or neglect in [a] campaign to implement the sex education curriculum through personal testimony and direct

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130. It should be noted that the makers of the dolls relied on a strict male/female sex assignment dichotomy and corresponding secondary sex characteristics. “Volume 1: Awareness” [ca. 1983], Box 6, Women Against Rape Records, Archives at Golda Meir Library, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI.

131. “Volume 1: Awareness” [ca. 1983], Box 6, Women Against Rape Records, Archives at Golda Meir Library, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI. Examples from both sets of dolls are visible in *Memory Keepers*, Krista Grensavitch and Allain Daigle, “Memory Keepers,” filmed April 2018, video, 7:13, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dWmPOFxo9U&t=3s>.

action.” However, the proposal was denied funding (\$35,000) by the Wisconsin Community Fund. Without the necessary funding to support its robust initiatives and goals to “ensure equitable and fair treatment of women at the law enforcement, legal, social service, regulatory, and judicial levels,” WAR disbanded in 1984.<sup>132</sup>

## **Introduction**

What calls for a shift in pedagogy? Why might instructors move away from or toward particular frameworks for teaching and learning? In this chapter, I reflect on pedagogical shifts in my own teaching practice. In particular, I will focus on shifts within my Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies (Intro, Intro to WGS). Drawing from nearly ten years of experience, I will discuss my decision to overhaul Intro to WGS curriculum that took place in the most recent years of my teaching. Responding to perceived student needs and knowledge, social and linguistic changes, the introduction of a new textbook format and several examples that utilized this format, and a dearth of source material that speaks to, with, and for some of the marginalized populations under consideration in the course, I developed an innovative, object-centered approach to teaching and learning.

Often utilized to describe the migrations of people over time, I find that the ‘push-pull’ paradigm is useful for assessing the questions I pose above. First proposed in 1966, scholar Everett S. Lee suggested that certain, unfavorable conditions (push factors) motivate people to leave a particular area. Other conditions (pull factors), ones that may offer a more favorable set of outcomes for a given population, cause people to move toward another location.<sup>133</sup> For example, one can evaluate Polynesian exploration from the fourth to twelfth centuries CE and

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132. Grant Proposals, 1981-1983, Box 6, Folder 5, Women Against Rape Records, Archives at Golda Meir Library, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI.

133. Everett S. Lee, “A Theory of Migration,” *Demography*, 3 no. 1 (1966): 47–57.

assess the motivations for traveling across great, unknown ocean distances as a combination of push and pull factors. High population density on the relatively small islands and diminishing food supplies may have pushed people to seek out new lands. At the same time, the prospect of greater access to natural resources, freedom from social or political systems, and even a sense of adventure might have pulled explorers to board their rafts and venture across the open sea. Since I was introduced to this framework as a graduate teaching assistant, I have found it useful for conducting historical analysis. It allows for, even encourages, nuance and complication. Often, a messy matrix of factors emerges through an application of this analytical framework, emphasizing the complexity of the historical narratives we tell and receive. I think it useful to apply the paradigm here, where I assess my motivations for undertaking such a substantial curricular shift. As I will illustrate, there is no singular or mono-directional reason for the overhaul I managed.

#### *Accounting for Push and Pull Factors*

Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies is a course I am well-familiar with, though it is a course I never had the experience of taking, myself. I began teaching Intro to WGS as a graduate teaching assistant (TA) for Women's Studies at UWM in the spring semester of 2012. I have taught the course nearly every academic semester since, sometimes multiple sections per semester in face-to-face, online, and condensed formats. From the first semester, I was allowed the academic freedom and authority to design my own assignments, means of evaluation, and curriculum. However, as many first-time teachers intimately know, building a course from the ground up is a daunting task. As a TA, I was a member of a small mentor group that met weekly. As a member of this group, I shadowed an experienced WGS instructor's Intro classroom and was given full access to their course materials, which I was encouraged to utilize and alter as I

needed. These resources I had access to through document sharing and class shadowing - a syllabus, course schedule, reading list, sample assignments and in-class activities - were essential as I entered a classroom as instructor of record for the first time. I drew heavily from those resources, especially that first semester.

Since my first semester as instructor of record and in each semester thereafter, I re-evaluate both the content and my mode/s of delivery, responding to student needs, social and political events, and scholarly trends, both in terms of available content as well as insight and new suggestions for 'best practices,' which often emerge from the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). Adjusting curriculum, which includes both content and delivery, also responds to my own needs as a teacher-learner within the classrooms I facilitate. Teaching the same course semester after semester can be seen as an onerous chore for some (I can't imagine the boredom that must manifest from reciting the same lectures every semester) or a great comfort for others who enjoy the stability of having prepared and rehearsed lectures. I have always seen this cycle as a site for opportunity. The certainty of change over time means that as semesters progress, new insights, scholarship, and relevant case studies emerge; I would be remiss if I did not account for academic developments as I developed curricula. Furthermore, my own feminist activist practices call me to remain engaged in ongoing conversations about the state of our field. Parallel to the changing academic landscapes that impacts my curricular development, I observe changes in my students and the socio-political landscape in which we all reside.

In the near decade that I've served as an Intro to WGS instructor, I've noticed significant changes in my students regarding the knowledge and, to a lesser extent, the skills of critical analysis they bring with them - even on the first day of class. These changes are push factors that call me to re-evaluate and even change my approach to pedagogy. I recall that in the first

semesters (in 2013 and 2014), a few students in each section might be familiar with the concept of gender as a social construct (the phenomena of social construction can apply to any category of identity). Perhaps they didn't understand the implications of or the theoretical nuance required to make this argument, but the general idea that gender is both constructed and performative was not a foreign concept.<sup>134</sup> As the semesters progressed, I can say anecdotally that increasing numbers of students enrolled in class possessed the sophisticated understanding that gender assignment, gender identity, and gender expression, for example, do not refer to or mean the same thing. In 2014, about the time that I started the first class meeting with round-robin introductions that called students to introduce themselves by name (and later, chosen name) and preferred pronouns (and later, pronouns-in-use), inevitably I had to explain to visibly confused students what pronouns were and why it mattered that we explicated them. To do so, I would turn the question to the class and at least a handful of students would offer an explanation to their classmates. By 2018, asking students to introduce themselves in this same way would induce nary a bat of the eye.<sup>135</sup> At the same time, students might arrive to the first class meeting of an Intro to WGS classroom wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with the phrase "my feminism will be intersectional or it will be bullshit."<sup>136</sup> Just a year or two previous, if students had a firm understanding of intersectional feminism by the *last* day of class, I was pleased.

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134. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, when this theorizing of gender was first introduced by scholars like Judith Butler, the idea that gender is both constructed and performative *was* groundbreaking, see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity* (Routledge, 1990).

135. The assessments I offer here are based on my observations and impressions, not on quantifiable data. While it would be possible, even easy, to create a survey asking students to identify terms and concepts set to be introduced over the course of the academic semester with which they are familiar, I fear that doing so might serve as a kind of gate-keeping, making students feel as though they need to enter the classroom with a certain level of disciplinary knowledge (which is not actually required of them).

136. A t-shirt like this evokes complicated (and necessary) discussions about capitalism

Where and how, then, were students accessing this information, and becoming comfortable with what some would call inclusive teaching and learning practices - and doing so with increasing frequency? Here I can point to instances of feminist activism impacting and altering our socio-political landscape. Since the start of 2017, we have witnessed the largest single-day protest in U.S. History - the Women's March on Washington - and the rise of the #MeToo Movement. Both received (and continue to receive) significant attention from news media outlets and they remain a topic of conversation on social media platforms. In the present day we are witnessing an explosion of feminist and queer activism on social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram.<sup>137</sup> The public discourse about the meaning, impact, and future of both the Women's March (the group that organized the event as well as the movement that has followed) and the #MeToo Movement is extensive and ongoing. Importantly, these conversations have

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coopting the feminist movement as well as how "intersectionality" is wrongfully deployed as a term that simply calls for an analysis based on the multiple identities a person may occupy at any given time. Analysis using an intersectional lens demands that we consider how systems of power that oppress and deny has bearing on the slippery, multiple, and intersecting identities we occupy, see Aja Romano, "This Famous Feminist's Quote Has Been Seen All Over the Internet. She Hasn't Seen a Cent," *Vox*, August 12, 2016, <https://www.vox.com/2016/8/12/12406648/flavia-dzodan-my-feminism-will-be-intersectional-merchandise>; Merry Wiesner-Hanks, "Early Modern Intersectionalities and Activism," *Society for the Study of Early Modern Women*, accessed February 1, 2019, [http://ssemw.org/blog/wiesner\\_hanks/](http://ssemw.org/blog/wiesner_hanks/).

137. Conversations about the role of social media, especially Twitter, as a force to incite socio-political activism and change began in 2011 with the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, see Philip N. Howard and Muzammil M. Hussain, *Democracy's Fourth Wave? Digital Media and the Arab Spring*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). An image of Alaa Salah, a young woman dressed in white and surrounded by a sea of raised smartphones, has quickly become the symbol of the ousting of Omar Hassan al-Bashir, the (now) former President of Sudan. The image, taken by photographer Lana H. Haroun and shared via Twitter on April 8, 2019, quickly went viral, Shirin Jaafari, "Here's the Story Behind the Iconic Sudanese Woman in White," *Public Radio International*, April 10, 2019, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2019-04-10/heres-story-behind-iconic-image-sudanese-woman-white>.

addressed issues regarding diversity and inclusion, asking us to consider who the movements benefit and - at the same time - who they silence or marginalize.<sup>138</sup>

Knowledge emerging from feminist and queer theory and activism achieved a significant marker of reaching the mainstream in the late-2010s: recognition by various English-language dictionaries. Based on observed trends in usage, Merriam-Webster added the words “cisgender,” “genderqueer,” and the honorific “Mx.” to their dictionary in 2016.<sup>139</sup> Notably, in 2017, Merriam-Webster named ‘feminism’ its word of the year.<sup>140</sup> The gender neutral pronoun set they/them/theirs has gained significant traction and recognition as grammatically acceptable for use with the third person singular.<sup>141</sup> Commentary from the *Oxford English Dictionary* illustrates how the institutions that dictate proper usage instruct English language speakers on the use of the singular they. To frame the practice, the institution points to the instances of acceptable use by referencing historical antecedents as well as a perceived uptick or shift in contemporary usage.<sup>142</sup>

During my time as WGS instructor, the department-like-body at UWM changed its name from Women’s Studies to Women’s and Gender Studies, following a strong disciplinary trend.

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138. For a discussion about how participation in the 2017 Women’s March shaped her activism in terms of recognizing racial equity (or the lack thereof) in the feminist movement, see Rachel Cargle, “This Photo Of Me At The Women’s March Went Viral And Changed My Activism Forever,” *HuffPost*, January 20, 2018, [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/black-women-march-viral-photo\\_n\\_5a6215cfe4b0125fd6362e7b](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/black-women-march-viral-photo_n_5a6215cfe4b0125fd6362e7b).

139. Niraj Choski, “Why Merriam-Webster added ‘cisgender,’ ‘genderqueer,’ and Mx.’ to the dictionary,” *The Washington Post*, April 26, 2016.

140. The word of the year is selected based on a number of metrics, including year-over-year increases in online look-ups, “2017 Word of the Year: Behind the Scenes,” Merriam-Webster, accessed April 18, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/video/2017-word-of-the-year-behind-the-scenes>.

141. For an extensive and nationally-recognized guide on pronoun usage, see the one developed by UWM’s LGBT Resource center, “Gender Pronouns,” Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center, accessed April 19, 2019, <https://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/support/gender-pronouns/>.

142. See Dennis Baron, “A Brief History of Singular ‘They,’” September 4, 2018, in *OED Blog*, <https://public.oed.com/blog/a-brief-history-of-singular-they/>.



Insight from queer theory along with an increased emphasis on trans- and cross-disciplinary scholarship and learning expanded the purview of many Women's Studies programs across the United States. Increasingly, explorations of gender (including masculinity studies) and sexuality became central to the content presented as well as the theoretical frameworks utilized. Many institutions sought and seek to reflect these changes by changing the program or department's name.<sup>143</sup>

I note both these examples to emphasize the role that institutions play in the inevitability of linguistic change over time. By inclusion in the dictionary or through official departmental name changes, it remains clear that institutions seen as social authorities wield the power to validate the changes in language and naming that many activists (including our students) see and use, often far before institutions affirm this usage. Propelled by social media and validated by institutional powers, the language of women's rights, survivor's rights, and the rights of people of color has quickly become part of our vernacular. Perhaps it should *not* be surprising that students would enter my classroom with this knowledge and a vocabulary shaped by feminist and queer activism. Here, too, changes in language (which evidence changes in social attitudes, values, and even disciplinary goals) as validated by institutions push me to modify my pedagogy.

Shifts and changes in student knowledge and language are significant push factors in my decision to overhaul my approach to teaching and learning in Intro to WGS. Meeting students

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143. Not all institutions follow this specific shift - typically, programs and departments once know just as "Women's Studies" may now be titled some variation of "Women's, Gender, Sexuality, Queer, Feminist, etc. Studies." Even across the University of Wisconsin System, there is great variation in program/department naming practices. For instance, UW-Superior hosts a Gender Studies department while UW-Parkside hosts Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies department, "Gender Studies," University of Wisconsin Superior, accessed April 18, 2019, <https://www.uwsuper.edu/acaddept/si/gender-studies/index.cfm>; "Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies," University of Wisconsin Parkside, accessed April 18, 2019, <https://www.uwp.edu/learn/departments/wgss/>.

where they are - in terms of knowledge, accessibility-related issues, format and delivery methods - is central to my teaching practice. I found that as students came to class with a worldview and language informed by feminist and queer epistemologies, I could place more emphasis on the development of critical thinking skills and disciplinary habits of mind, as opposed to spending time ensuring that students left my class with a sound understanding that sex (assigned sex) is not the same as or determinant of gender (gender identity). This shift would serve to challenge both me and my students.

When I began teaching Intro to WGS, I used *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions*, a textbook favored by WGS (then, Women's Studies) at UWM.<sup>144</sup> Currently in the sixth edition, the text introduces feminist knowledge, theory, and concepts thematically in separate chapters with titles like "Inscribing Gender on the Body" and "Systems of Privilege and Inequality." Along with my students, I felt a growing aversion to the textbook. For example, the chapter titled "Health and Reproductive Justice" spurred intense conversations about the lack of representation of trans people and their health and reproductive justice-related needs. More than one student felt marginalized, even erased, by the text's presentation of content.<sup>145</sup> In simpler matters, the book is large, heavy, and expensive; students often could not afford the text and, by virtue of its size, often opted not to bring it to class meetings, though they were instructed to do so. Pushed by these factors, among others, I sought out new textbook options.

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144. Susan M. Shaw and Janet Lee, *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6th ed. (McGraw Hill Education, 2014).

145. Conversations about the text's erasure of trans health and reproductive justice issues inspired a conference panel presentation. Along with Casey O'Brien, another Intro to WGS instructor, and several students, I presented "Negotiating Conflict: Learning and Discussing Health and Reproductive Justice in an Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies Classroom" at the 2016 Summit on Women, Gender, and Well-Being at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

At this same time, I witnessed changes in the format, content, and embedded teaching and learning goals of newly-published Intro to WGS textbooks. Precipitated by developments in SoTL, new approaches to teaching and learning in Women's and Gender Studies (along with other disciplines, to be sure) called for instructors to facilitate the acquisition of disciplinary ways of thinking, habits of mind, and threshold concepts.<sup>146</sup> In short, research and insight from SoTL began to call us to position our students as practitioners of our discipline and not just as passive vessels waiting to be filled with knowledge originating from that same discipline.<sup>147</sup> Therefore, a mixture of push and pull factors account for my shift to a new textbook.

*Threshold Concepts in Women's and Gender Studies: Ways of Thinking, Seeing, and Knowing*, first published in 2015 and currently in its second edition with a third edition in the works, represents a significant development in how WGS is taught within the higher education classroom. Explicitly resisting the coverage model, the text's authors Holly Hassel and Christie Launius advocate for instructors to facilitate the acquisition of disciplinary ways of thinking. The text is meant to help students position themselves as practitioners of women's and gender studies. In the introduction to their text, Hassel and Launius explain that threshold concepts "provide a feminist lens across the disciplines and outside the classroom" and are "core disciplinary concept[s] that [are] both troublesome and transformative."<sup>148</sup> Using threshold concepts - here, the social construction of gender, privilege and oppression, intersectionality, and feminist praxis, as frameworks for analysis and interpretation, students become familiar with tools and insights utilized by intersectional feminist theorists.<sup>149</sup> Another WGS text, *Everyday*

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146. See the Introduction and Literature Review chapter for a comprehensive discussion.

147. Find an extended discussion of this in the Introduction and Literature Review chapters.

148 Holly Hassel and Christine Launius, *Threshold Concepts in Women's and Gender Studies: Ways of Thinking, Seeing, and Knowing*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2018), vii.

149. Hassel and Launius, *Threshold Concepts*.

*Women's and Gender Studies: Introductory Concepts* written by Ann Braithwaite and Catherine Orr similarly moves away from the topic-based textbook model that characterized much of Women's Studies textbook writing and format.<sup>150</sup> It bears significance that both titles include the word "concepts" in their title, owing to the influence of SoTL. Both texts draw from the language of threshold concepts to first introduce and then facilitate the acquisition of tools and skills utilized by practitioners within the discipline.

After lengthy consideration and two semesters spent piloting modules built around content from these new textbooks, I settled on *Threshold Concepts*. The textbook is significantly cheaper and its size and organization allow for greater flexibility. The slim volume and close-of-chapter suggestions for additional resources and readings, and not the inclusion of said resources and readings as it is in *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions*, and *Everyday Women's and Gender Studies* allows for greater flexibility and control. Here, instructors can choose auxiliary and supporting content and activities that reflect student needs and interests, current events, and their own approach to teaching and learning. Students can reference these suggestions and turn to important feminist, queer, and transdisciplinary contributions that address their own emerging interests and identities. For me, this additional content serves a variety of functions: it illustrates the ideas, theories, and frameworks presented in the textbook chapters; it offers alternate and challenging viewpoints from the chapters; and it encourages further exploration and suggests opportunities for linking theory with practice.

Reflecting the ways in which the identities of those in the classroom were and were not reflected in the course content and assignments leads me to note the final push factor that spurred

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150. Ann Braithwaite and Catherine M. Orr, *Everyday Women's and Gender Studies: Introductory Concepts* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

my shift. As I mentioned above, realizing that transgender people (an identity that some of my students occupy) and their needs were not included in discussions about reproductive health and justice in the old textbook started a greater impulse to reflect on other people, identities, events, and locations that were perhaps missing in the course as I had designed it. I perceived that my curriculum lacked source material (most often, text-based) that spoke to, for, and with this and other marginalized identities. If I wanted my pedagogy to be truly student-centered and inclusive of diverse identities, then I had to make revisions. A first response to this is to simply seek out and draw from a more diverse group of writers and scholars. Through my own research and by consulting with others, I found chapters and articles that could supplement the introduction of threshold concepts, as presented in the course text. These new readings are written by and about identities formerly under-represented in my syllabus.

As many historians acknowledge, written texts provide source material for knowing about only some portions of the greater population. For myriad reasons, whole populations of people are absent, missing, or silenced in the written record. Often, these populations experience marginalization in social and political settings, and not just in the archives or narratives. If I were to be wholly reliant on written chapters and articles to deliver content, it could then be possible - even likely - for me to omit the intellectual contributions and presence of people who occupy marginalized categories of identity. Knowing that a full breadth of identities could not be interrogated or recognized from consulting written texts alone, I was pushed from relying on this source material to fill my syllabus. Like many historians, archaeologists, and anthropologists before me, I turned to material culture to address the gaps and silences. To use Lee's language of push and pull factors that I referenced at the start of this section, the prospect of a more favorable set of outcomes pulled me to incorporate objects (material culture, stuff, things, etc.) in my Intro

to WGS curriculum. Turning to objects, I contend, allows for teachers and learners to represent, elevate, and interrogate a broad range of identities. When rooted in Material Culture Theory, it offers the discipline novel epistemological routes for exploring knowledge and meaning-making.

As part of my curricular redesign that included a new course textbook and updated assigned readings to better reflect the variety of identities I wish to teach to, with, and for, I introduced a new assignment series I called “Object Lessons.” This semester-long series asked students to engage in object-based learning. In the sections to follow, I will provide examples illustrating how shifting my pedagogical approach to account for student knowledge, interests, social and linguistic changes, and a new textbook, led me to incorporate an object-centered approach to teaching and learning. A reciprocal arrangement is also true, I find. A shift in pedagogical approach to include objects also requires curricular accommodations. Upon reflection, identity emerges as a theme that directs the push and pull factors I identify above: student understanding of their own identities, as shaped by their social and political surroundings; disciplinary movement toward a teaching and learning paradigm that helps students critically engage with identity; and the recognition that source material and course content typically turned to for use in classroom settings often is not representative or inclusive of a broad range of identities. I continue this discussion in the next section.

### **Discussion: Identity**

How do we know who we are, what to call ourselves, how that dictates the ways we interact with others, and why this line of questioning even matters? Countless academic disciplines address these same questions - questions about identity. Here, I won't provide a lineage of how writers and scholars and thinkers have formulated ways of discussing identity. These are important and interesting paths to follow, but it's not my intention here to do that

work. Instead, I build from other writers, namely feminist and queer theorists and writers, who have sketched out for us that identities are socially constructed, that they are mutable, changing and changeable, and become salient depending on context and location.<sup>151</sup>

In some way, each of the push and pull factors I identify in the previous section addresses identity. Accounting for identity happens in several locations in my teaching and learning practices. As I develop curriculum I make space to recognize and interrogate:

- The identities of teachers and learners who occupy the classroom space together
- The identities of scholars, writers, activists, makers, etc. whose work and intellectual contributions make up a large part of the sources and resources we consider over the academic semester
- The identities that can possibly be accounted by, through, and with assigned course content, discussion prompts, and other classroom activities and assignments

The categories I list above often overlap and intersect. The list is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather is a list-in-progress that marks this current stage in the development of a teaching and learning practice that seeks to be inclusive of a broad range of identities, some of which cannot be accounted for because I (along with others) am unable to conceive of them.

In my position as an instructor of Intro to WGS, one of my primary goals is to get students to begin to think critically about identity, if they haven't already. This is challenging work. I continue to be challenged as I work to name and understand my own identities. For many students - indeed, many people - realizing that they identify and are identified in particular ways is at first like realizing that, although you have known you were a fish all your life, that you are surrounded by and dependent on water. Furthermore, an investigation of individual identity

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151. For an excellent example of a work that does chronicle how feminist and queer theorists formulate an understanding of identities, see Susan Stryker, "Contexts, Concepts, and Terms," chap. 1 in *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution* (New York: Seal Press, 2017).

necessarily calls us to then grapple with how other people identify, what social systems shape the process of identification, and how we can work to resist, dismantle, or reshape these systems.

The course textbook, *Threshold Concepts*, was one of my tools. Building from preceding chapters that introduce threshold concepts “The Social Construction of Gender” and “Privilege and Oppression,” the chapter titled “Intersectionality” helps students investigate identity in a way that builds from these concepts and sharpens their skills of critical analysis. The text introduces the idea, arguing that “the notion of ‘intersectionality’ is at the heart of feminist analysis” and states, “different groups benefit from or are disadvantaged by institutional structures, and this chapter will review how overlapping categories of identity profoundly shape our experiences within institutions...although gender as a category of analysis is useful, it is incomplete without understanding that other categories of identity...are equally as important in gaining accurate knowledge about people’s lives and experiences.”<sup>152</sup>

Though they have become rather common terms in feminist, queer, activist, and even mainstream contexts in recent years, “intersectional,” “intersectionality,” and “intersectional feminism,” and the critical analyses of identity they call for were invented by and have long been taken up by women and feminists of color. From the late 1970s,<sup>153</sup> Barbara Smith and the Combahee Collective as well as legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw provided a framework for the intersectional analysis we undertake.<sup>154</sup> These scholars call us to consider categories of identity

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152. Hassel and Launius, *Threshold Concepts*, 114. This statement, in that it emphasizes that identities other than gender must be taken into account when engaging in feminist analysis, illustrates the disciplinary changes that precipitated the shift from “Women’s Studies” to “Women’s and X, etc. Studies.”

153. Some may argue that this call occurred as early as 1851, in the speech Sojourner Truth gave to those assembled at the Women’s Convention in Ohio that has come to be known as the “...ain’t I a woman?” speech.

154. See “The Combahee River Collective Statement, Combahee River Collective, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://combaheerivercollective.weebly.com/the-combahee-river-collective->



like gender, race, class, ability, sexual orientation, age, etc., interrogating how these identities intersect in particular ways, given a particular context, and fix individuals within systems of privilege and oppression. Built from a critique of mainstream feminism by feminists of color, this intensive analysis works to ensure that we do not homogenize experience based on a single category of identity, like gender. For example, in today's political landscape, increasing calls for pay equality often homogenize "women" into a single group. A quick internet search for "pay gap" turns up results that address the "gender pay gap" and report that as of 2017, women earn eighty percent of what men earn.<sup>155</sup> A statistic like this calls into question "which women?" Applying an intersectional lens illustrates stark wage differences for white women, Black women, Latinx women, and Native American women. Presenting information about a "gender pay gap" thereby erases the huge discrepancies in pay between these groups of people, who all identify as women.

With the mainstream use of the terms (which often correlates to the ways in which white feminists/forms of hegemonic feminism take up the term), we see a dulling of intersectionality's critical edge, and even full misapplications of the term. In the previous section, I mentioned that our students may arrive in our classrooms wearing t-shirts that proclaim "my feminism will be intersectional or it will be bullshit." While I may agree with this message, I have my doubts that students entering an Intro to WGS classroom comprehend what it means to engage in intersectional analysis of identity. I notice, then, a new challenge in helping students to develop skills that allow them to think from a intersectional feminist perspective. In some ways, we have

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statement.html; Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, (1990): 1241.

155. The calculation is based on an earnings ratio that divides women's median earnings over men's median earnings, see "Economic Security," AAUW, accessed April 22, 2019, <https://www.aauw.org/research/the-simple-truth-about-the-gender-pay-gap/>.

to help students not just learn - but re-learn - what an intersectional analysis offers and how to apply an intersectional lens to their object/s of study. The course textbook *Threshold Concepts in Women's and Gender Studies* identifies this “learning roadblock” and suggests that,

We find that [undergraduate students] are readily able to grasp the notion that the experiences and perspectives of women differ in relation to various additional aspects of identity, and they generally need to look no further than their fellow classmates to understand this...students from impoverished and working-class backgrounds know from the start that their lives have differed from their middle-class peers in fundamental ways that shape their perspectives on a wide number of issues...while this way of understanding intersectionality can be a productive entry point, it is not meant to be an end point. More specifically, the challenge is to think about those differences among women in the context of systems of privilege and oppressions. Otherwise, we lapse into relativism and lose sight of the significance of implications of those differences in terms of power and privilege.<sup>156</sup>

Therefore, teachers and learners in an Intro to WGS classroom must be careful not to default to a pedagogy based simply on difference, or on the recognition of differentiations in the way that individuals identify. Drawing from this perspective, but pushing past it is a distinct challenge for teaching and learning efforts in WGS classrooms. In my experience, students begin to comprehend this idea through assigned readings, like the “Intersectionality” chapter in *Threshold Concepts*, as well as through supporting assigned readings.<sup>157</sup> It is by applying the ideas, concepts, and lenses from the readings onto their own lives and experiences that they begin to develop a deeper level of meaning.

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156. Hassel and Launius, *Threshold Concepts*, 120-1.

157. For the Intersectionality module, I assigned the following auxiliary readings: bell hooks, “Feminist Class Struggle,” in *Feminism is for Everybody*; bell hooks, “Women at Work,” in *Feminism is for Everybody*, Gloria Anzaldua, “La Conciencia de la Mestiza;” Audre Lorde, “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference;” and Margo DeMello, “Racialized and Colonized Bodies.”

### *The Gender Norm Violation*<sup>158</sup>

Several years ago I began asking students to complete an eye-opening exercise I called a Gender Norm Violation as a way to think about identity, its social construction, and how expressions of gender identity are policed in the wider world.<sup>159</sup> In this assignment, I asked students to identify and break a gender norm and then reflect, through writing, on their experiences doing so.<sup>160</sup> For example, I suggested to students that they could wear clothing assumed appropriate for another gender or that they could insist to hold the door open for others in public. In any violation they choose, I instructed, they must first think about what practices are considered socially appropriate for their own gender and then assume a behavior considered unsuitable or at least challenging to their own gender identity. This assignment prompted students to think about the way they have internalized gender norms and social scripts, those things understood to be socially acceptable behavior given a person's gender identity. In choosing to perform an action considered unsuitable or contrary to the norms established for those who shared their same gender identity, students began to interrogate several important ideas: that gender is performative, that such performance is ruled by a set of (often unspoken)

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158. Knowingly, I ask my students to engage in a bit of strategic essentialism here. I recognize that gender identity cannot be extricated from the complicated and slippery matrix of identities we occupy. Invariably, issues of race, age, ability, etc., come to bear on how my students identify and experiment with their own gender identity, gender expression, and practices of adhering to or subverting socialized gender norms. In the course schedule, the Gender Norm Violation/Gender Journal assignment comes before the module on Intersectionality. Therefore, most students are not equipped with knowledge of this threshold concept and the critical lens it provides our analyses. However, I offer an extra credit assignment later in the semester called "Revisiting the Gender Journal" that asks students to apply an intersectional lens to the activity and revisit their initial reflections.

159. This assignment was adapted from one developed by Casey O'Brien.

160. When choosing a norm to violate, I asked students to violate a "folkway," what sociologists refer to as those behavioral and performative practices societies develop to frame and ease social interactions.

expectations, and that how others perceive gender can differ from how one understands them self to be gendered.<sup>161</sup>

Over time, I observed that my students commit these so-called gender norm violations on an increasing and regular basis. Anecdotally, I can report that many woman-identified students<sup>162</sup> shared in classroom conversation and in assignment submissions that they don't regularly shave body hair, that they wear men's clothing, or that they did not wear makeup - all examples of gender norms ascribed to women-identified people that students report regularly violating. However, these behaviors are not terribly surprising given recent data regarding social attitudes toward gender. While our society still relies heavily on a gender binary to dictate social norms and mores, research indicates that thirty-five percent of students who belong to Gen Z know someone who uses gender-neutral pronouns (for example: they/them/theirs) and that they increasingly understand gender as well as sexual orientation to be best understood as on a spectrum.<sup>163</sup> Therefore, I began asking students to instead complete a Gender Journal, an assignment that asks students to take stock of their gender identity (wherever it falls on the gender identity spectrum) and reflect on their experiences living as knowingly gendered persons going about their daily routines over the course of one week. Several prompts they may consider as a starting point for creating an entry include: "did you find yourself violating any gender

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161. For a useful and regularly updated guide that defines gender expression, gender identity, and numerous other terms pertinent to (and often conflated with) gender identity, see Sam Killermann, "The Genderbread Person v4," It's Pronounced Metrosexual, accessed January 12, 2019, <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2018/10/the-genderbread-person-v4/>.

162. In every semester that I have taught Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies, the vast majority of the students in my class identify as women.

163. "Gen Z More Familiar with Gender Neutral Pronouns," Pew Research Center: Social and Demographic Trends, accessed April 22, 2019, [https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt\\_1-17-19\\_generations-02/](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt_1-17-19_generations-02/).

norms?” “where do you feel safe/not safe expressing your gender?” and “what do you feel you are permitted/not permitted to do because of your gender identity?” This assignment builds from the former Gender Norm Violation assignment and extends the intended investigation, which prompts students to both understand and begin to push the boundaries of what it means to have a gender identity, express that gender to social others, and do so within institutions that dictate privilege and oppression.

Reflecting on the more than ten sections of this course I have taught, what becomes clear from student submissions from both assignments, is that an early and frequent way students begin this gendered self-assessment and experimentation with pushing society’s strictures for communicating gender is through and with their use of objects. How students begin to understand and investigate their identities often starts with how they use - or don’t use - things. From makeup, to clothing, to deodorant, students note how experimentation with gender expression through and with things allows them the necessary time and space to develop a deeper understanding of gender identity - whether it is their own or others’. For example, several semesters ago a woman-identified and feminine-presenting student reported in their reflection, which was then shared in a wider classroom discussion, that they decided to wear men’s deodorant to their place of work, a children’s daycare center. While going about the usual business of caring, the student reported that one of the children remarked to them that they didn’t smell right. Eager to probe the ways in which children are socialized both to be gendered as well as police others’ expressions of gender, my student asked their charge what they meant. The ensuing conversation, which was reported during a face-to-face class meeting, helped those in attendance understand the breadth of the social construction of gender as well as how it is policed - even by children.

For many students completing the Gender Norm Violation/Gender Journal assignments, everyday objects feature prominently in reflections about their experiences as gendered people or as they discuss the process of breaking gender norms. Objects like deodorant, clothing, makeup, even writing utensils,<sup>164</sup> despite being central to our mundane performances of gender, seem to recede from view until an interrogation of gender and gender performance is called for.

Quotidian objects, then, like gender identity and expression, become naturalized and are part of the ‘gender water’ that surrounds us. Through this assignment, students begin to realize how the ways in which we identify dictates our use of objects, mundane or otherwise. Conversely, using objects has great bearing on how we - and others - express and read gender and other identities.

#### *Identity from a Material Culture Perspective*

Continuing this analysis from a material culture perspective, that students process their understanding of gender and other categories of identity through and with objects is not surprising. While scholarship addressing the exploration of identity through and with material objects is lacking from feminist pedagogy literature<sup>165</sup>, there is fertile ground from which to start.

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164. In 2012, Ellen DeGeneres comedically critiqued a new line of pens intended exclusively for a woman-identified consuming audience on her daytime television talk show, *Ellen*. I show this clip from DeGeneres’ show when introducing the Gender Norm Violation/Gender Journal Assignment to help students begin thinking about the ways in which our use (or explicit non-use) of mundane objects takes on gendered meanings, “Bic Pens for Women,” *YouTube*, accessed April 25, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCyw3prIWhc>.

165. Anne M. Derousie and Vivien E. Rose propose teaching Women’s History with objects to investigate populations underrepresented in the annals of history, but I can find no example of scholarship that scaffolds higher ed student learning and analysis of identities - whether of the self or others, see Anne M. Derousie and Vivien E. Rose, “History You Can Touch: Teaching Women’s History through Three-Dimensional Objects,” in *Clio in the Classroom A Guide For Teaching U.S. Women’s History*, eds. Carol Berkin, Margaret S. Crocco, and Barbara Winslow (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 239-252. There is some precedent, however, for interrogating identity through and with photographs (a type of material culture). After I developed a very similar activity that I assigned in my Introduction to WGS course, I found that another instructor utilized Lois Bielefeld’s series of photographs titled *Androgyny* as the basis of a chapter in a resource text meant to guide teaching and learning for the K-8 classroom. Both

Scholarship emerging from material culture theory posits that objects and identities are co-constituted and entangled, existing in a complicated matrix that requires care, labor, and near-constant consideration.<sup>166</sup>

In *Stuff*, Daniel Miller makes a compelling argument about the power and influence of mundane objects. Like gender identity (and other identities), quotidian objects seem to recede from our view and become part of the ‘gender water’ I mention earlier in this section.<sup>167</sup> Miller suggests that everyday objects tend to fade from our immediate view and become seemingly unimportant or unremarkable. By virtue of “the humility of things,” he argues, those objects which are common, familiar, mundane, or everyday also are relegated as secondary or even as completely unimportant in interrogations of identities or the past, for example. However, these objects tell us much about ourselves and illustrate what we communicate to others about ourselves: what we eat, how we care for our bodies, and what we value. By narrowing our analytical gaze and assessing these objects, we can begin to tap into the wider networks of production and consumption and to posit not just how but why people are socialized in particular

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assignments (mine and Kim Cosier’s) ask students to consider Bielefeld’s photographs in order to unsettle assumptions about gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation, see Kim Cosier, “Framing Identity: Using Photographs to Rethink Sexism, Gender, and Sexuality” in *Rethinking Sexism, Gender, and Sexuality*, eds. Annika Butler-Wall et al. (Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools, 2016), 397-407; Lois Bielefeld, *Androgyny*, 2014-2015. Photographs, Video, and Audio. <https://www.loisbielefeld.com/androgyny>.

166. See Myriem Naji, “Gender and Materiality in the Making,” *Journal of Material Culture* 14 (2009): 47-73; Ian Hodder, *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

167. I don’t mean to suggest here that people can be “gender-blind” (thinking this way parallels other problematic and damaging ways of thinking in which people claim they, “don’t see color” or “treat everyone equally”), but that gender, as a dichotomous and biologically-derived system of naming difference, is naturalized within our mainstream cultural context. This naturalization means that gender identity usually goes unquestioned. The *Threshold Concepts* chapter “The Social Construction of Gender” helps students begin to dismantle these culturally-derived notions of gender, if they haven’t already.

ways.<sup>168</sup> Here, we can begin to investigate how objects connect and indicate relationships between identities and institutions: schools, governments, corporations.

Building from the central tenet that people things make people and people make things, Ian Hodder's *Entangled* is a significant work within the field of material culture studies that allows me to expand my own thinking about the relationship between objects and identities. Building from the supposition that "humans depend on things" and "things depend on humans" (both are chapter titles), Hodder draws from scholarship which argues that the development of human cognition was dependent on things and our increasingly complex interactions with them. Citing studies that suppose the co-emergence of human language and use of tools, Hodder proposes that "human existence is thingly, irreducibly so."<sup>169</sup> Providing more than a spark or conduit for the development of human cognition, our interactions with objects - in flows, streams of energy, and through smells, sounds, and feelings - continue to shape our experience of the world as well as our identities. Hodder expands:

Familiar things are absorbed into our sense of identity; they become recognized and owned... There is a dependence of humans on things. We move towards things and take them in. But also we object. We move away from dangerous things, we only eat certain foods...[a]t the personal level we form identities by rejecting things, refusing to do things in certain ways, denying certain ways of seeing, feeling, acting, doing things.<sup>170</sup>

In Hodder's assessment, identity manifests itself from our interaction with familiar things, objects we reject, and stuff that surrounds our everyday life. Based on our acceptance or rejection of things, we create, confirm, and maintain our identities.

Attending to identities matters in our practices of teaching and learning. As I understand myself to be constituted of a complex and shifting matrix of identities, I must also recognize that

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168. Daniel Miller, *Stuff* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010).

169. Hodder, *Entangled*, 38.

170. Hodder, *Entangled*, 38.



my students and colleagues are as well. How each of us is situated impacts what we learn, how we learn, and how we do (or don't) carry that information forward.<sup>171</sup> Emerging scholarship from SoTL and other pedagogically-focused sub-fields emphasizes why this matters.<sup>172</sup> Material culture theory offers the necessary amendment that attending to identities can happen through and with objects. Associated methodologies offered by material culture theorists suggest further rationales that links objects and identities and propose *how* teachers and learners can investigate identity through a consideration of objects, even everyday objects.

Given that Intro to WGS and other WGS, History, and humanities courses more broadly explore and interrogate identities outside of the heteronormative, androcentric, and white-centric mainstream, it can often be a challenge to find source material that supports activities and assignments that ask students to apply knowledge gained from the course textbook and readings. Similar to Derosie and Rose's rationale for turning to material culture (or, as they say, three-dimensional objects) to explore the lives of historical "others," I, too, contend that a shift to object-based teaching and learning is necessary when teachers and learners investigate those under- (or not) represented in textual records. How to facilitate this kind of investigation of

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171. First suggested by Donna Haraway, "situated knowledge" dictates that knowledge is not objective, but is always subjective and formed within particular contexts (that can align with locations, identities, time periods, etc.). Furthermore, situated knowledge always provides partial accounts of reality and must be congregated in order to provide a larger (and nuanced) account. Situated knowledge directly contests the possibility of scientific objectivity and the white/andro/hetero/Western context from which it emerges, Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575-99.

172. In recent years, there has been a significant uptick in available scholarship that addresses the need for inclusive teaching and learning, see DL Stewart, "Language of Appeasement: Why Colleges Need a Language Shift." *Inside Higher Ed*, March 20, 2017, <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/03/30/colleges-need-language-shift-not-one-you-think-essay>; Kevin Gannon, "The Case for Inclusive Teaching," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 27, 2018. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Case-for-Inclusive/242636>.

identity through and with the use of objects is distinctly missing from feminist teaching guides and pedagogical resources. As I stated in the introduction, I created the Object Lesson assignment series for Intro to WGS so that students could continue their exploration of threshold concepts and attend to identities often missing from text-based sources. While I don't ask my students to become fluent in language from material culture theory, it does significantly inform my design of the assignment.

### **Designing an Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies Course**

As I noted in the opening section, in the Spring 2018 semester, I chose a new Intro to WGS text book, which allowed me flexibility in my curriculum planning. Shifting to a new textbook significantly altered my organization of the course, also calling me to reorganize the course schedule. Based on the five body chapters in *Threshold Concepts*, I constructed the course around five modules that lasted two weeks each. As the academic calendar dictates that this course met twice per week (for a sixty-five minute class session), I could dedicate four class periods to each module. For a typical, fifteen-week semester, this allowed for two to three "open" weeks, after I accounted for a week each for course introduction and wrap-up and final presentations (typically, I assign a final project for the face-to-face sections of Intro to WGS). In my near decade of teaching Intro to WGS, I found that students respond well to structured modules that have a regular pattern of readings, activities, and assignments. Providing patterns and clear expectations for assignments and due dates is one simple way that teachers can support learners who juggle busy lives full of significant responsibilities outside the classroom. Therefore, I chose to make each of the five modules based on a *Threshold Concepts* chapter follow a regular sequence of assignments and due dates. An additional module that focused on a

special topic (gender violence and consent), lasting just one week, followed parts of this regular pattern.

I distributed the course schedule on the first day of class (and made it available on the D2L course site accessible by each of the students) and students found a regular pattern for each module.<sup>173</sup> During the first week, all students would complete: an assigned reading (one chapter from *Threshold Concepts*) and one written assignment (a reading response, based on a prompt I provided). The topic of the *Threshold Concepts* chapter dictated the topic of the module and the reading response asked students to both illustrate they read and retained information from the assigned chapter reading and begin to critically engage with the ideas that were presented in the chapter. Additionally, each student offered a discussion question that could be posed to the class. This part of the reading response helped to direct in-class discussions for the span of the module as well as to indicate ideas, terms, and topics that they were having difficulty understanding. In the second week of the module, all students would complete: assigned article readings (typically, three articles that continued, challenged, or otherwise extended the ideas from the assigned chapter reading), an assignment I called an Engagement Activity (this activity asked students to consider resources including photographs, podcasts, and videos and apply their developing knowledge of that module's threshold concept in a brief analysis), and an in-class activity I called Object Lesson.<sup>174</sup> The Object Lessons were held on the final class meeting of the module and served both as a culmination to the module and a way of extending and linking each of the threshold concepts, as presented in the chapter readings.

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173. The course schedule from Spring 2018 is available in Appendix G.

174. For the one-week module on gender violence and consent, students completed a hybrid/condensed version of the typical pattern: two assigned article readings, a reading response, and an object lesson.

I take care to attend to student needs, identities, and ways of knowing as I design course curriculum. Part of this, as the Engagement Activity assignment hopes to achieve, is meeting students where they are. In this sense, “where they are” does not refer to ability; rather it is an idea that informs my choice of location in terms of where content and resources are hosted and available (even popular). Working to personalize content, whether choosing from a prescribed list or seeking out additional resources on our own, directed much of the content and work I incorporated as I laid out the revised class schedule. By personalize, I mean to suggest that I was motivated to make both the content and mode of delivery relevant to my students. For example, I intended for each of the five activities Engagement Activities to meet students where they were in terms of where they access and process information. As I discuss in the Objects and Public History chapter in this dissertation, increasingly, students both access and process knowledge on social media platforms (like Twitter and Instagram). Additionally, they often seek out resources presented in formats that are not written texts (like videos, vlogs, and podcasts). To link content from the class to “real-world” ideas and platforms, each Engagement Activity called students to access content in ways that were likely familiar to them. For example, in the “Social Construction of Gender” module, I assign students to view *Androgyny*, a photography and video/audio series by artist Lois Bielefeld.<sup>175</sup> In a written reflection, I instruct students to complete a series of prompts that ask them to think critically about how they read others’ gender expression and identity.<sup>176</sup> See Appendix I for an example of the Engagement Activity assignment and these prompts.

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175. Bielefeld, *Androgyny*.

176. While photographs can certainly be analyzed from a material culture perspective, asking students to do so was not my intent for this Engagement Activity. I reserved a material culture theory-informed analysis of objects for the Object Lesson assignment series.

“Where they are” in terms of a fixed, geographic location is an element I also take into consideration. As many undergraduate students who attend UWM come from the State of Wisconsin - eighty-two percent of students are Wisconsin residents - I often incorporate information and sources from and about the state.<sup>177</sup> Bringing in objects and narratives about and from the local context added something new to the curriculum I developed and helped me to recognize student identities in a way that most other course materials did not allow. This element of curriculum design had great bearing on fulfilling my goal to meet students where they are in terms of geographic location. In turn, asking students to interrogate objects and documents from their immediate surrounds ensures, in part, that they have the opportunity to engage with ideas that are personally meaningful. What material culture theorists have to say about the co-creation of objects and identities comes to bear on this aspect.

Building from successes and great experiences I had collaborating with library colleagues at UWM while teaching other courses (including HIST 243: History of Women in American Society, a course I discuss in another chapter), I consulted Abbi Nye (then, Interim Head of Archives and currently, Reference and Instruction Archivist) and Max Yela (Head of Special Collections), both from UWM’s Golda Meir Library. Both Special Collections and Archives contain a wealth of information, resources, and objects about UWM and its surrounds.<sup>178</sup>

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177. “UWM Facts,” UWM Facts Database, accessed April 26, 2019, [https://uwm.edu/facts/?fwp\\_facts\\_search=wisconsin](https://uwm.edu/facts/?fwp_facts_search=wisconsin).

178. UWM’s Golda Meir Library is unique in that it hosts both the Archives Department and Special Collections. Together, they make up the Archives and Special Collections Division at the UWM Libraries. In my experience, staff in both routinely communicate and collaborate to ensure that UWM’s collections are accessible to all. Collecting initiatives in UWM’s Archives focus more on documents and from UWM and the metropolitan Milwaukee area, though in their holdings, Special Collections hosts a UWM authors collections as well as objects from the Milwaukee Handicrafts Project (a Works Project Administration program) and Milwaukee German-Language publications, for example, “About the Archives,” University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, accessed April 30, 2019, <https://uwm.edu/libraries/archives/about-the->

Because of my developed working relationship with Nye and Yela, I knew I could approach them without a definitive plan. Building from our established collaborative relationship and my understanding that they are engaged colleagues eager to work out details of a proposed project as a group, I approached them when I had just the basis of my idea for the Object Lesson assignment series. In these past projects, Nye and Yela shared with me their extensive knowledge of the material holdings in both Special Collections and Archives, graciously sharing with students approaches and methods for learning through and with those sources, often examples of material culture.

### **Memory Keepers**

Teaching and learning through and with objects is not new. However, as I outlined in my Review of Literature chapter, few scholarly resources (especially in feminist and history pedagogy in higher education) exist that address incorporating teaching and learning through and with objects in the contemporary classroom. One useful chapter advises regarding the use visual sources (one type of source material utilized in this assignment series), and one provides reflections about teaching and learning with three-dimensional objects, but no single contemporary source provides a satisfactory discussion of both *why* and *how* - elements central to my own investigation here - one might begin to teach through and with objects.<sup>179</sup> In my assessment, a pedagogical form that anticipates and prefigures my suggestion/contribution exists: the object lesson. By virtue of its long history and its development over time by the many hands,

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archives/; "Special Collections at UWM Libraries," University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, accessed April 30, 2019, <https://uwm.edu/libraries/special/collections/>.

179. See Tracey Weis, "Teaching Women's History with Visual Images," in *Clio in the Classroom: A Guide For Teaching U.S. Women's History*, eds. Carol Berkin, Margaret S. Crocco, and Barbara Winslow (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) 223-238; Derousie and Rose, "History You Can Touch."

minds, and initiatives it meant to serve, the object lesson is an ideal pedagogical form for contemporary consideration, especially for those looking to expand their teaching practice to include objects and attend to identity-related issues. Furthermore, historicizing the object lesson provides avenues for addressing questions related to both why and how to develop an object-based curriculum.

Building from historical form and teaching precedent, I began devising the Object Lesson assignment series for use in my Intro to WGS classroom.<sup>180</sup> It's important to note that, historically, object lessons took a variety of forms and served a broad audience of teachers and learners: from kindergarteners to college-aged students. There is no singular orthodoxy or orthopraxy for creating and facilitating lessons in this form. It is entirely possible that object lesson pedagogues Mary Sheldon Barnes or Elizabeth Mayo would look at the curriculum I developed and take umbrage with my usage of "Object Lesson." In my own adaption, I intended that the semester-long assignment would challenge students to consider what they were learning from textual sources when that knowledge was brought to bear on material objects specially selected for particular, thematic course units. Extending student acquisition of threshold concepts, the assignment series would facilitate an investigation of a central question: "where do texts fail us?" Pushing this interrogation a step further, I proposed, "...and how are objects uniquely suited to respond to gaps and silences in the historical, textual record, and, drawing from our interactions with these objects, how do we fill them?" This kind of inquiry draws from a basic observation Carter makes about the role and function of the object lesson: they "link

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180. See the Introduction and Review of Literature in this dissertation. From this point forward, I will refer to the assignment series I created as "Object Lessons." When referring to the general pedagogical form, I'll use "object lessons."

between learning how to observe and learning how to think.”<sup>181</sup> Marrying frameworks for observation from material culture studies with threshold concepts, as informed by SoTL and feminist pedagogy, along with my intention to attend to identities - mine, my students’, those of often under-represented communities - pushed me to consider other non-textual forms of source material and ways of knowing. Refining this initiative further to account for the geographic and cultural origins of those within a UWM classroom, I made the decision to draw from locally-held resources.

I brought these central questions and initiatives, with a revised course schedule in hand, to the first curriculum planning meeting with Max Yela and Abbi Nye in the months before the Spring 2018 semester. To start our meeting, I shared context for the course overhaul, as I explain earlier in this chapter. Knowing that I could rely on their extensive knowledge of objects, photographs, and texts available in UWM’s collections, I shared each of the topics I wished to pursue through and with objects. Four topics followed threshold concepts from the course text and the final was based on a special topic, my way of responding to coverage in popular news and media outlets - a topic, I observed, that had come to the forefront of many discussions, and not just those that emerge in WGS classrooms. They are:

- The Social Construction of Gender
- Privilege and Oppression
- Intersectionality
- Feminist Praxis
- Gender Violence and Consent

In our meeting, we moved sequentially through each of the proposed topics. I gave a bit more contextual information about the topic and the sub-themes we were to explore during that module and Nye and Yela suggested objects and resources in UWM’s holdings. I countered with

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181. Carter, *Object Lessons*, 67.



my own suggestions and the subsequent hour of fruitful conversation and strategizing passed in a flash. Our conversation led us to a wide range of objects: from books, to photographs and greeting cards and requests for name changes, to handmade cloth dolls. For each Object Lesson class period, students would consider a range of objects from a given collection. We intended that the range would help raise and answer a variety of questions and the general abundance of objects would mean that nearly every student would be able to materially engage at the same time. Shortly after, I followed up with a general schedule and outlined logistics including meeting location and plans for object transportation. This schedule, which includes the full list of topics and objects, can be found in the Course Schedule (Appendix J).<sup>182</sup>

On the class first meeting of the semester, I introduced the course to my students and explained the kind of work and assignments I would ask them to complete. As it was the assignment pilot, I was sure to devote class time on that first day, briefly explaining to students my own academic research goals (in short: why and how to teach through and with objects), and outlining what purpose this assignment would serve. Asking them to first read through the course syllabus (Appendix H) on their own, I instructed them to arrange themselves into small groups and discuss the prompt: “what does it mean to analyze critically or critically engage?” Then, I asked students to read through the Course Schedule, which includes a detailed, week-by-week summary of assigned readings, activities, and other important notes or due dates. Here, students saw a separate table with the dates, topics, and objects to be considered in the Object Lessons

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182. While the Object Lesson series followed a regular pattern, there were two notable exceptions. I invited a guest facilitator, Dr. Brice D. Smith, to assist with the first Object Lesson and this lesson took place within our own classroom. Given that the objects we considered were books, Nye was able to transport the objects from Special Collections to our classroom. I held the fourth Object Lesson in the Emile H. Mathis Art Gallery, located within UWM’s Art History department and planned this lesson in collaboration with Leigh Mahlik (Curator, UWM Art Collection and Galleries).

assignment series. Again, students formed small groups and they discussed a slight variation on the first prompt: “what value might objects bring to our critical engagement and ability to critically analyze?” I did not record my students’ responses to the in-class discussion prompts, though they did share back to the larger group after each of the two small-group discussions. I was less concerned with the substance of their answers than I was introducing terms like “critically engage” and “object-based analysis” - terms that would become central to our teaching and learning over the next fifteen weeks.

The Object Lesson assignment series made up fifteen percent of the final course grade and students received an Object Reflection (OR) worksheet for each of the Object Lesson class periods, making each of the four graded ORs worth three-and-three-quarter percent of the final course grade. Thus, each OR was a fairly low-stakes assignment and I graded ORs on a pass/fail basis. I delivered paper copies of ORs on the day of the Object Lesson; each was a two-sided sheet of paper that contained four separate prompts. The questions followed a regular pattern. First, I asked students to complete a “Pre-Object Encounter” which asked them to consider how objects might extend, challenge, or otherwise impact their understanding of the threshold concept or special topic under consideration for the given module.<sup>183</sup> For example, OR5 asked students: “How do you imagine an object might be able to challenge your understanding of the topic we’ve been investigating for the last week: ‘Consent?’ How might an object be uniquely suited

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183. As four of the five lessons were held outside of our classroom space, students would often gather just outside of our designated meeting locations upwards of fifteen minutes before our scheduled start time (I recognize that I had a very timely bunch of students for the Spring 2018 semester!). As students gathered well before our allotted time in Special Collections or in the Emile H. Mathis Gallery, they had time to address the first prompt. If students did not arrive early, they typically had five to ten minutes to complete the prompt at the start of the class meeting, when my co-facilitator and I went through “housekeeping” and general introductory points.

to explore the topic, perhaps in a way that the texts we've read weren't able to address?<sup>184</sup> In the five ORs I created, this question varied little and generally asked students to think back to the readings, discussions, and activities completed during that same module and identify any lingering questions or gaps they may have observed.

After brief introductions to the objects under consideration for the given Object Lesson, the students spent the bulk of the class meeting engaging with the objects themselves. I did not assign students to work in groups, pairs, or alone; rather, I let students self-direct and choose how they wanted to spend their time addressing the second prompt on the OR sheet.<sup>185</sup> This prompt remained consistent over the course of the series and, under the heading "Investigating the Object," asked students: "Provide a brief sketch (in words, drawings, diagrams, etc.) of the object under consideration (attach additional pages, if necessary) – please choose a single item to investigate. Imagine, observe, and speculate and consider: [a list of bullet-pointed prompts available in Appendices K through O]." To create the bullet-pointed list, I drew from a number of established frameworks developed by: Jules Prown, the Wisconsin 101 Project, and World History Matters.<sup>186</sup> With ten to fifteen minutes left at the end of the class meeting, I solicited the classroom's attention and facilitated (usually, along with Yela and Nye) a group discussion.

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184. All five assignment sheets for the Object Reflections are included in Appendices K through O.

185. In my observation, students usually completed some combination of all three. Depending on how they moved around the room to engage with the objects, they worked in solitary observation or chatted with a classmate or two. When acting as facilitators, Max Yela and Abbi Nye spent considerable time engaging with students during this exploration period. Additionally, I surveyed the room and engaged with students, asking them about their progress, their observations, and generally engaged in object analysis alongside and with them.

186. See Jules Prown, "Mind in Matter," *Winterthur* 17 (1982): 1-19; "What is an Object History," Wisconsin 101: Our History in Objects, accessed May 1, 2019, <https://wi101.wisc.edu/object-description/>; Daniel Waugh, "Material Culture: Objects," World History Sources, accessed May 1, 2019, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/worldhistorysources/unpacking/objectsmain.html>.

During this time, I welcomed students to share impressions about the objects under consideration, how the objects and narratives that emerged challenged their assumptions about the module topic and their own understandings, and any general questions or observations they wanted to share. These were engaging and fruitful discussions. Because I spent the class period engaging in critical object analysis alongside my students, I had my finger on the pulse of how they were looking, how they were reacting, and how they were learning and I drew from this knowledge to direct this final part of the class meeting.

With their own impressions and with words from their classmates and co-facilitators still ringing in their ears, students left the classroom instructed to respond to two final OR prompts under the heading “Post Object Encounter.” These prompts were particular to each Object Lesson and contained the greatest variety in what I asked students to consider. One prompt asked students to critically engage. Often, this prompt asked students to recall an idea or passage from reading assigned earlier in the module. For example, OR5 asks students, “Identify at least one passage/point from the three assigned articles for this unit (“Cat Person,” Roupenian; “Consent Accidents and Consent Violations;” “A Plea to Stop Saying Yes to Sex When You Really Want to Say No”) and describe how your encounter with the object, our class discussion of it, or any reflections you came away with challenges your understanding of consent. Pay special consideration to audience in your critical analysis: consider who the dolls are meant for and who the intended audience of the articles is – discuss how recognizing audience might impact your understanding of consent.” The other asked students to reflect. Again, in OR5, I asked students: “Consider your encounter with the objects in conjunction with the MPS (Milwaukee Public Schools) curriculum resources presented by Archivist Abbi Nye. Cite an example from the curriculum resource that stood out to you – explain why it stood out to you. How does

considering this source in conjunction with the dolls help expand your understanding of consent? How does considering this source in conjunction with the dolls help expand your understanding of feminist praxis?” ORs were due on the following class meeting. As Object Lessons were held on the final class meeting of the module (Thursdays), this meant that students had until the following Tuesday before they had to complete their responses.

Above, I strategically shared prompts from the fifth (and final) Object Lesson. This lesson asked students to explore the topic “Gender Violence and Consent,” a topic that did not have a corollary chapter in *Threshold Concepts*. Rather, I arranged for this to be our final topic of consideration, a site where students could practice using the theoretical lenses they began to acquire and explore through the *Threshold Concepts* modules. Notably, the directly preceding module explores feminist praxis, a concept that asks students to link theory with practice and think about how they could use the knowledge and ways of knowing they developed over the course of the semester in the “real world.” I intended for them to begin their own foray into feminist praxis with the fifth module and Object Lesson. In order to learn more about assignment outcomes and student reflections, view *Memory Keepers*, a pedagogical resource and teaching reflection I co-created to accompany the written text of this dissertation.<sup>187</sup>

With the generous support of the Chipstone Foundation, and with filmmaker Allain Daigle, I created *Memory Keepers* and call it a Teaching and Learning Video Resource.<sup>188</sup> This short video presents a mixture of in-class footage from the fifth and final Object Lesson session

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187. See, Krista Grensavitch and Allain Daigle, “Memory Keepers,” filmed April 2018, video, 7:13, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dWmPOFxo9U&t=3s>.

188. *Memory Keepers* is one in a series of Teaching and Learning Video Resources I created in my multi-modal dissertation. In Chapter 3, I present *Creating The Supper Club* and in Chapter 5, I present “Experiment in Education: Holy Hill” and “Experiment in Education: Increase Lapham”

and interviews with me (in the role of curriculum developer and instructor) along with Max Yela and Abbi Nye. In regards to how the content of the video fits with this chapter, in short, it provides insight about student experiences with the Object Lesson assignment series and highlight the importance of collaboration. The video showcases a combination of in-classroom evidence, reflection, and critical analysis - all elements typically included in the ‘outcomes’ section of a written chapter like this one. The Chipstone Foundation hosts the video on its YouTube channel,<sup>189</sup> where the following text provides context for the video resource:

This video traces the production, presentation, and reflection on a semester-long assignment series in an Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies course taught in the Fall of 2018 by Krista Grensavitch at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM). In this course, students completed a required assignment series titled Object Lessons, which asked students to both deepen and challenge their understanding of course content. The course text, *Threshold Concepts in Women’s and Gender Studies* (Launius & Hassel, 2017), along with other course content and the instructor’s pedagogical approach, introduced students to disciplinary ways of thinking, a means of developing critical thinking skills that extend a culture of learning beyond the space of the classroom (Hassel and Nelson, 2012). Here, students were asked to think like and engage as practitioners of women’s and gender studies. In each of the object lessons, students learned through and with material objects, continually pursuing a central question: “where do texts fail us, and how are objects uniquely suited to both identify and fill these silences?” Participating in feminist praxis, students then utilized threshold concepts as tools of engagement and knowledge production. Each of the five object lesson class sessions was held in collaboration with local authorities, both scholars in the community and experts on UWM’s campus. This teaching and learning resource records the fifth and final object lesson, held in Special Collections at UWM’s Golda Meir Library. During this lesson students drew upon their knowledge of threshold concepts in women’s and gender studies and investigated the idea of gender-based violence and consent. Considering both curricula from Milwaukee Public Schools as well as dolls meant to teach young children about sexual violence and consent, students utilized lenses like intersectionality and privilege in their investigation of creating and maintaining consent. Additionally, they pursued larger questions related to identity and well-being.

In addition to serving as the “outcomes” section of this chapter, *Memory Keepers*, along with the other Teaching and Learning Video Resources, are meant to impact a wide audience and remain

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189. See, Krista Grensavitch and Allain Daigle, “Memory Keepers,” filmed April 2018, video, 7:13, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dWmPOFxo9U&t=3s>.

accessible to a diverse group of teachers and learners. In the case of *Memory Keepers* and *Creating The Supper Club*, I do not intend for teachers or learners to exactly replicate the work I do with students and collaborators; rather, I hope that the videos serve as a point of inspiration and pedagogical grounding for others.

Dear readers, please watch *Memory Keepers* before continuing to the conclusion to this chapter.

## **Conclusions**

In their original setting, something for which we have no first-hand account to turn to, we can only imagine the classroom lessons that taught school children about violence, consent, and their own bodies. In the present day, we can just speculate as to how these issues were mapped onto the bodies of the dolls and how the dolls served to mediate the lessons and conversations. In the original setting, children learned through and with material objects. Thus, without naming it as such, teachers and learners engaged in a pedagogical form reminiscent of the object lesson. I will not take any time here to develop this point, though it bears mentioning in order to note the life span of the dolls. Material culture theorists often refer to an object's life span, emphasizing that it is important to consider how the function or use of an object has changed (or remained constant) over time. The dolls were created in order to fulfill a specific function: to educate children in Milwaukee classrooms about violence, consent, and their bodies. Students in Intro to WGS also explored these topics - especially violence and consent - but did so in a different context and for different means. In our hands and through our examination, the function of the dolls changed.

Imagination and empathy were required as we teachers and learners in Intro to WGS worked to learn through, with, and about the dolls. While we have just trace, archival evidence

about the specific context surrounding their creation,<sup>190</sup> we do know much more about the wider social and political forces that made creating these dolls necessary: a culture that allowed (and continues to permit) the rape and violation of people, including young people. Despite the historical context we can more easily access, along with corollaries from the news media or even our own experiences, we cannot know anything about the children who allowed their thoughts and experiences to be mediated through these dolls. We do not know their names, their genders, their races, or even their favorite colors. Coming to this realization, as individuals and as a class, was sobering. At times, it left members of the class unable to approach the dolls - for coming too close to an object that had mediated the realization of violence was understood (implicitly) as another possible iteration of violence.

What should we allow ourselves to imagine, then, if we are faced with potential acts of power and violence committed against children? In this case, speculating in generalities and not attending to the realities of a lived experience could be a means of ensuring our own well-being, especially if mention of gender violence and consent is triggering. For if we travel too far down the rabbit hole, we may call ourselves to imagine individual acts of violence committed against real and individual people.

With the Object Lessons assignment series, and in particular, the final Object Lesson session that introduced students to these dolls, it was never my intention to use the documents and objects under study to recover children's voices, experiences, or reconstruct their experience of trauma. Instead, I implored students to refine their skills of observation and to gain experience applying lenses like privilege and oppression or intersectionality in their critical analysis of an object of study. As I stated in *Memory Keepers*, under examination, objects can offer us insight

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190. See the Object History before the Introduction to this chapter.



into the lived reality of individual people: how they react, participate, resist, and belong. On their own, with their classmates, and in collaboration with instructing figures in the classroom, students asked questions of the objects. They recognized identities possibly left out of our consideration of gender violence and consent. Learning through and with the dolls, students critically engaged with issues of identity. Any creative imagining that took place, considering that violence did occur and that violence came to bear on the lives and identities of real people, perhaps began to build empathy.

### *Object Lessons: The Ultimate Pull Factor*

My knowledge that the object lesson as form of teaching actually *did* allow for teachers and learners to attend to various identities, pulled me into developing my own riff on the object lesson.<sup>191</sup> Sarah Anne Carter lays the groundwork in her own historical investigation of object lessons, explaining both why and how pedagogy and teaching approaches change based on student identities. She rightfully points out that, historically, attending to student identities through the use of object lessons was often racially-motivated and informed by racist politics that suggested, depending on identity, some groups of people were better suited for certain modes of learning, or, in contrast, other groups had inherent or immutable intellectual capacities that were not suited for higher-order intellectual pursuits. Carter states, “Some white Southerners may have assumed that African Americans sensed differently and relied more on ‘lower’ senses - touch, smell, and hearing, rather than sight - which were heightened through use. Their supposed ability

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191. In using the term object lesson, both in my summary of Carter’s work and in the appropriative sense (as the basis for the assignment series I develop), I do not mean to homogenize the term or practice. In the hands of various pedagogues since its inception in the late 1700s, the object lesson has existed in a variety of forms, has been delivered in a variety of modes, and - along with my contribution here - continues to be created by and for a wide range of teachers and learners.

to sense more acutely than whites could make them appear to be particularly susceptible to the study of material things.”<sup>192</sup> Here, the question of *why* centers of learning like the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute centralized the study of material objects is answered by racist logic that cast African American and Native American students as both intellectually inferior, though possessing ‘in-born’ skills that figured their perceived perceptual abilities as the only path to learning. The answer to *how* is inextricably linked: based on these perceived abilities, teaching domestic service skills through and with objects “would have rendered object lessons the ideal pedagogy for this situation, leveraging this presumed ability to observe as a way to improve intellectual development.”<sup>193</sup> Perhaps it can be argued that, in some cases, object lessons functioned as a tool of oppression - informed by epistemologies and stereotypes that cast women, some children, and people of color low on the hierarchy of intellectual ability and promise.<sup>194</sup>

I hope I have made quite clear that this is not the case in my own appropriation of the pedagogical form. However, attendance to identity in both historical forms of the practice, as well as my own, presents a compelling case for how teaching through and with objects or developing an object-based curriculum offers opportunities for shifting pedagogy based on student identity/ies. In my case, I knowingly subvert historical precedent and shift to objects as classroom source material in order to account for several ways in which I see issues of identity emerging in the contemporary humanities classroom:

- Students enter classrooms with increased and more nuanced understandings of identity, including that it must be understood and analyzed from an intersectional perspective. This shift is shaped by the social and political contexts that contribute to the creation of knowledge about identity/ies and is made accessible by the social media platforms which encourage sharing and adding to that body of knowledge.

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192. Carter, *Object Lessons*, 96-7. See “Object Lessons in Race and Citizenship” for a full discussion, Carter, *Object Lessons*, 93-116.

193. Carter, *Object Lessons*, 97.

194. Here is a fruitful path for further investigation.

- Disciplinary trends increasingly prioritize student acquisition of discipline-specific methods, lenses, and means of knowledge production over memorization of content. This trend is meant to impact student identity, both in the way instructors see their students and how students begin see themselves: as practitioners within a particular discipline who can claim authority.<sup>195</sup>
- The developing understanding that relying on written, documentary evidence silences, omits, or otherwise marginalizes people, their contributions and identities. While “the tyranny of the text” is most often addressed by researchers and scholars within academia, as the point above emphasizes, disciplinary trends call us to position our students as practitioners and this means calling students to similarly respond to the hold that text-based evidence has had on our processes of learning, teaching, and knowing.<sup>196</sup>

It is my goal to further the work of inclusive teaching and learning and engaged pedagogy as I address each of the goals I identify above.

In my case, *why* to turn to object-focused teaching and learning is not as closely linked to *how* as in the past. To address the question of *why*, I formulated the Object Lessons assignment series to allow us (here, I use the collective ‘us’ as I am referring to the work I conducted along with my students and collaborators) to think more deeply about the threshold concepts and special topic we investigated. After reading the *Threshold Concepts* chapter, a set of related articles, and engaging in class discussion, I intended for the objects to introduce another layer of understanding for each concept – at the same time, challenging all of us to critically engage with the content – calling us to complicate the understandings we had recently developed.

Specifically, I included objects in the curriculum this semester to reach the following learning objectives:

- Explore themes and concepts with wide-ranging (global) impact through a local lens – most selected objects somehow representative of Milwaukee/UWM/geographical region.<sup>197</sup>

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195. See the Review of Literature chapter for an extended discussion about the contributions of SoTL and feminist pedagogy.

196. See the Review of Literature chapter for an extended discussion about the contributions of SoTL and history pedagogy.

197. A life-long Wisconsin resident, myself, I often make a conscious decision to incorporate objects and narratives from and about our local context. In any classroom, I work to create

- Emphasize the value of considering material culture/objects/things in discussions related to (marginalized) identities.
- Pursue the central questions: where do texts fail us? How are objects uniquely suited to respond to gaps and silences, and how do we fill them?

To answer the question of *how* to shift pedagogy toward object-based teaching and learning, I urge my readers to consider this chapter a model. In the aforementioned appendices I provide course material that I developed especially for this case. Additionally, I offer *Memory Keepers*, a Teaching and Learning Video Resource, to illustrate the work, reflections, and possible outcomes of a shift toward object-focused teaching and learning (link and more information in Appendix P).

In the introduction to this chapter I shared that shifting my pedagogical approach to account for student knowledge, interests, social and linguistic changes, and a new textbook led me to incorporate an object-centered approach to teaching and learning. Building (and, in some ways, strategically departing) from a historical precedent, I developed the Object Lessons assignment series. A reciprocal arrangement is also true, I find: a shift in pedagogical approach to include objects also requires accommodation. It calls for intensive collaboration, willing collaborators, support from outside the academy, and for students to take a leap into the unknown with their instructor.

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community for the singular goal of creating a safe environment for students to learn with and from one another. I offer something to consider about inclusive teaching practices and utilizing local resources, objects, and narratives: perhaps there is an argument to be made about local teaching/teaching from the local with promotion of safe and brave spaces.

## Chapter 5 Engagement in Education: Objects and Public History

### Object History: Holy Hill

The Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary, Help of Christians at Holy Hill, more commonly referred to as Holy Hill,<sup>198</sup> is a minor basilica of the Roman Catholic Church and is located in southwestern Washington County. Holy Hill is perched in the Kettle Moraine at one of the highest points in southeastern Wisconsin, an elevation of 1,330 feet above sea level and is surrounded by hundreds of acres of natural forest.<sup>199</sup>

Originating as a pilgrimage site for Marian devotions, Holy Hill continues as a place of devotion and worship. Since 1906, Discalced Carmelites, members of a Roman Catholic religious order, have overseen the site.<sup>200</sup> However, a religious presence was established at the site beginning in the mid-1800s. Local legend offers accounts of Francois Soubrio, the so-called “Hermit of Holy Hill.” Soubrio is said to have been inspired to find the place after reading the journal of Father Jacques Marquette. After identifying the location and experiencing a religious healing at its peak, Soubrio built a small chapel. He proceeded to inhabit the hill during the 1860s.<sup>201</sup>

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198. According to Carl Quickert’s 1912 text *Washington County, Wisconsin: Past and Present*, Holy Hill has also been referred to by a number of names, including: Lapham’s Peak (named in honor of Increase Lapham, an early surveyor of the area), Hermit Hill, and the Sugar Loaf. Carl Quickert, *Washington County, Wisconsin: Past and Present* (Chicago, IL: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1912), 58-59.

199. “Holy Hill, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form,” National Park Service, accessed November 19, 2015, <http://focus.nps.gov/nrhp/GetAsset?assetID=5cbb8b0d-1562-48df-a69d-6663a576be09>; “Wisconsin High Points,” Wisconsin State Cartographer’s Office, accessed November 20, 2015, <http://www.sco.wisc.edu/mapping-topics/wisconsin-high-points.html>.

200. Peter-Thomas Rohrbach, *Journey to Carith: The Sources and Story of the Discalced Carmelites* (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2015), 335.

201. Quickert, *Washington County, Wisconsin*, 58-59.

A series of religious and residential structures were built through the early twentieth century. Ecclesiastical projects at the site culminated with the construction of the current church structure, which was completed in 1931.<sup>202</sup> The architectural style of the church is Romanesque Revival.<sup>203</sup>

From its early days, Holy Hill has attracted a multitude of visitors, both pilgrims and sightseers alike. In the present day, the site hosts more than 500,000 visitors annually.<sup>204</sup> Holy Hill was listed on both the National and State (Wisconsin) Registers of Historic Places in 1992.<sup>205</sup>

## Introduction

My family's story in Milwaukee, Wisconsin begins sometime in the first part of the twentieth century. City of Milwaukee directories first mention Charles and Anna Glasser (nee Bauer) in 1911. Charles and Anna came from Austria and arrived in Milwaukee (via Connecticut) before my maternal grandmother (Audrey Faust, nee Glasser) was born in 1927. City data indicates that, when they first arrived in Milwaukee, Charles worked as a porter and he and Anna lived at 159 Lyon.<sup>206</sup> During their first years in Milwaukee, listings in the directory tell

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202. Rohrbach, *Journey to Carith*, 335; "Holy Hill, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form," National Park Service, accessed November 19, 2015, <http://focus.nps.gov/nrhp/GetAsset?assetID=5cbb8b0d-1562-48df-a69d-6663a576be09>.

203. "Holy Hill, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form," National Park Service, accessed November 19, 2015, <http://focus.nps.gov/nrhp/GetAsset?assetID=5cbb8b0d-1562-48df-a69d-6663a576be09>.

204. "Services at Holy Hill: They Were Attended by Fully a Thousand People," *Milwaukee Journal*, May 25, 1895; "Home," Holy Hill website, accessed November 20, 2015, <https://www.holyhill.com/>.

205. "1525 Carmel Road," Wisconsin Historical Society website, accessed November 20, 2015, <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Content.aspx?dsNav=Ny:True,Nrc:id-658,N:4294963828-4294963813&dsNavOnly=Ntk:All%7choly+hill%7c3%7c,Ny:True,Ro:0&dsRecordDetails=R:N R1283>.

206. *Wright's Milwaukee City Directory* (Milwaukee, Wright's Directory Co., 1911). In the

us that they moved almost every year and that, as time passed, Charles found work as a janitor and a barkeeper. In 1918, Charles and Anna lived at 914 Richards,<sup>207</sup> a mere four blocks from where I live today in Milwaukee's Riverwest neighborhood.<sup>208</sup> By the time my grandmother was born, they seem to have found housing stability; a sample of searches in the 1926-1928 directories indicates that they continued to live at 1125 27<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>209</sup>

My Grandma Audrey loves to remind her grandchildren that her mother, who worked as a kitchen maid in a Viennese palace where the Emperor of Austria resided, was called "Laughing Anna" by children living at court.<sup>210</sup> We're told that Anna's husband, Charles, worked in the palace stables. My maternal grandfather's family likely arrived in Milwaukee around the same time, though the untimely deaths of both my maternal grandfather and his father (whose own father came from Germany, likely sometime in the mid- to late-nineteenth century) means that similar details about their arrival were not preserved.<sup>211</sup> Still, I have some idea about my family's time living and working in the City of Milwaukee.

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present-day house numbering system, the address is 517 East Lyon Street. In 1930, the City of Milwaukee overhauled the street name and house numbering system necessitating a giant (227-page) conversion table in the 1930 City Directory. The Milwaukee County Historical Society made this table available as a digital resource, "Street Name Conversions," Milwaukee County Historical Society, access December 15, 2018, <https://milwaukeehistory.net/street-name-conversion/>.

207. *Wright's Milwaukee City Directory* (Milwaukee, Wright's Directory Co., 1918); Using the conversion table, this address is present-day 2466 North Richards Street.

208. See Tom Tolan, "Riverwest," in *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, edited by Amanda Seligman and Margo Anderson (Encyclopedia of Milwaukee, 2016), <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/riverwest/>.

209. *Wright's Milwaukee City Directory* (Milwaukee, Wright's Directory Co., 1926); *Wright's Milwaukee City Directory* (Milwaukee, Wright's Directory Co., 1927); *Wright's Milwaukee City Directory* (Milwaukee, Wright's Directory Co., 1928); this address is present-day 2835 North 27th Street, about one mile due-west of where I live today.

210. See Bill Reck, "Austrians," in *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, edited by Amanda Seligman and Margo Anderson (Encyclopedia of Milwaukee, 2016), <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/austrians/>.

211. Given the received timeline of immigration, my German-born family members were

Oral tradition from both paternal and maternal sides of my family informs me that my man-identified City of Milwaukee fore bearers included a police man, a bar owner, and a paver. Conspicuously, my family members do not explicitly name or categorize the work my grandmothers and great-grandmothers performed within and for the City of Milwaukee in the same way. Based on this omission and from received knowledge, I am left to conclude that their work took place almost entirely within the home. Still, in short, I come from a family of working-class laborers. As a group, they participated in life in the city from the early to mid-twentieth century, a time of great change regarding worker's rights, race and gender dynamics, and suburban development. A combination of these movements meant that by the time my parents were born (1958 and 1962), my maternal and paternal grandparents had moved their families about thirty miles north to Washington County,<sup>212</sup> to rural homesteads roughly two miles apart.<sup>213</sup> Here, my parents grew up in homes built by some of Wisconsin's first white settlers (my father's log cabin was built in the 1860s and my mother's farmhouse in the 1880s): farmers searching for better land, better opportunities, and better quality of life. I spent most of my own childhood living in the house my own mother grew up in. My maternal grandmother no longer needed the five bedrooms for her eight children, so my parents bought the house in 1996; they continue to live there today.

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likely not "Forty-Eighters," Alison Clark Efford, "Germans," in *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, edited by Amanda Seligman and Margo Anderson (Encyclopedia of Milwaukee, 2016), <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/germans/>.

212. Krista Grensavitch, "Washington County," in *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, edited by Amanda Seligman and Margo Anderson (Encyclopedia of Milwaukee, 2016), <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/washington-county/>.

213. Though they did not know one another when they lived in Milwaukee, it's no shocking coincidence that both sets of grandparents, once again, ended up living in such geographic proximity. The so-called "white flight" phenomenon characterizes the movement of relatively large numbers of working-class white families from urban to suburban areas in many rust belt cities, Milwaukee included.



My grandparents and the children they raised were active in their rural community. Many members in both families identify as Catholic and my mother, father, and I share similar memories of attending mass at Holy Hill - and not just on Christmas and Easter - with our family units each Sunday.<sup>214</sup> Holy Hill also served as a place of employment; along with my mother, father, and many aunts and uncles, my first job was at Holy Hill.<sup>215</sup> Three generations of my family have enjoyed the summer months by playing in recreation league baseball and softball teams, the teams organized by both local bars and workplaces.<sup>216</sup> My partner played in a work league at Wick Field in the mid-2010s and I was reminded by my father that his father would return to Milwaukee to play at the same field years after he and my grandmother moved to Washington County.<sup>217</sup>

The history of the City of Milwaukee and the surrounding four-county area has always been my history, even if I didn't discover this in earnest until I was in graduate school. While I have always had a passing interest in family genealogy and savored time receiving oral histories at the feet of my grandparents, contextualizing my own family's origins within a greater history of the City of Milwaukee and its surrounds did not occur to me and was not initially important to

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214. Though official named "The Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary, Help of Christians at Holy Hill," the basilica is known as Holy Hill, Krista Grensavitch, "Holy Hill," in *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, edited by Amanda Seligman and Margo Anderson (Encyclopedia of Milwaukee, 2016), <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/holy-hill/>.

215. I worked as a receptionist in the monastery. In a time before most people found this information on the internet, I gave driving directions and mass times (which I can still easily rattle off) over the phone. Mostly, I spent weeknights from 4:00 pm until 7:00 pm completing my homework and would sometimes chat with a brother or father who walked down to see how I was doing.

216. See Neal Pease, "Sandlot Baseball," in *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, edited by Amanda Seligman and Margo Anderson (Encyclopedia of Milwaukee, 2016), <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/sandlot-baseball/>.

217. See Joseph B. Walzer, "Outdoor Recreation," in *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, edited by Amanda Seligman and Margo Anderson (Encyclopedia of Milwaukee, 2016), <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/outdoor-recreation/>.

me. My graduate school studies first transported me to Ancient Greece as I studied a little-known class of Classical Athenian pots (called a *lebes gamikos* by later archaeologists) thought to have been gifted to upper-class women upon their marriage. It wasn't until several years into my coursework that I began to evaluate my research and how it could impact a wider audience. In what I thought was an exceedingly sharp turn (but upon reflection, not terribly sharp, as the focus of my research was still about learning, thinking, and creating knowledge through and with material objects), I shifted my research questions to investigate the possibilities of teaching and learning through and with material objects from a decidedly local perspective. At about this same time, I was hired to fact-check entries for the *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee (EMKE)*, a public history project that "aims to provide comprehensive coverage of the history of Milwaukee."<sup>218</sup> The project is housed, in part, at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM). This limited-term summer job led to four more positions within the scope of the project, which I continue to this day. My work for and with *EMKE* brought me to the fields of Public and Urban History, Digital Humanities, and also to a greater sense of my own identity, as contextualized by the history of the urban area I live in.

My early work for *EMKE* expanded my understanding of historical subfields and practices; it helped me to understand how one functions as a historian and what sort of forms the work of doing history can take. It also taught me much about my own's family history. Inevitably, my own research efforts led me to think about how this public-facing resource could serve as a site for supporting teaching and learning efforts. By virtue of the form of its presentation as well as its name, *EMKE* belongs to a genre that seeks to teach and make

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218. "About," *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, accessed May 11, 2019, <https://emke.uwm.edu/about/>.

knowledge accessible, according to the conventions of the genre. The encyclopedia *is*, by its very production, a tool for teaching and learning. From historian Sima Qian, who lived and worked in Han China during the first century BCE, encyclopedic record-keeping of people and events has been central to the writing of history. Many of us can recall walking from our grade school classroom to the school library, in a single file line, to pull heavy volumes from the shelf as we worked on assigned reports about the State of Virginia or the Nation of Egypt (I remember consulting volumes in my school's *Encyclopaedia Britannica* set as I conducted research for both reports in fourth grade and fifth grade, respectively). Students today may not experience that singular pleasure of balancing a massive tome in their lap, sitting cross-legged on the carpeted library floor, furiously turning the thin, easily-torn pages, mentally singing the alphabet song. Nowadays, students turn to digital repositories like Wikipedia as they embark on research projects (and we hope that this is not where their research initiative ends). Either way, whether consulting physical or digital resources, turning to an encyclopedia has long been an important facet of both history-making and accessing historical narratives.

As I thought about utilizing *EMKE* as a teaching and learning tool, I pondered how this could happen in conjunction with object-based teaching and learning. Here, I turned to another local project, Wisconsin 101: Our History in Objects.<sup>219</sup> The Wisconsin 101 project hosts a digital repository of objects, either from a local context or that are pathways to exploring local events, identities, or places, that serve as an entry point to a historical narrative. A “digital museum,” Wisconsin 101 links objects and narratives from a local context with a wide, public audience. Both objects (digitized representations) and written narratives are available on the

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219. “Wisconsin 101: Our History in Objects,” Wisconsin 101, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://wi101.wisc.edu/>.

website. Navigating the website asks users to search objects by topic, much in the way users search for entries on the *EMKE* website, and clicking a title like “CCC Pillow Sham,”<sup>220</sup> takes users to a brief narrative about the object, which includes a large, high-quality image of it. The website also offers resources for teachers and learners looking to incorporate object-based histories within the classroom setting. A section for resources for the undergraduate classroom contains my own syllabus for History 192: Thinking with Things: History and Material Culture, a course I developed and taught at UWM.<sup>221</sup>

With the Wisconsin 101 project, I found a pathway for presenting object-based historical narratives that utilized organizational conventions from the encyclopedia genre. While my own work would not replicate this exact format, I knew it was possible to marry object-based history and object-based teaching and learning within the encyclopedia format. My next step would be developing that initiative for the *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*.

#### *The Encyclopedia of Milwaukee Project*

Following other large-scale and collaborative Urban History projects like *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History* or *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, the *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee* is meant as a reference tool available to and accessible by a wide population.<sup>222</sup> The project was made possible through a successful grant application to the National Endowment for

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220. Joe Hermolin, “CCC Pillow Sham,” Wisconsin 101, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://wi101.wisc.edu/ccc-pillow-sham/>.

221. Krista Grensavitch, “HIST 192: Thinking with Things: History and Material Culture,” Wisconsin 101, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://wi101.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/508/2018/06/Thinking-with-Things-Syllabus-Grensavitch.pdf>.

222. Publication of *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History* (first published in 1987) and *The Encyclopedia of New York City* (first published in 1995) were both hailed as significant moments in Urban History. Availability of these volumes meant that a large and public audience could not only access knowledge of a place, but that the work local and amateur researchers did in collaboration with academic historians would be presented and understood as both valid and authoritative.

the Humanities (NEH), which awarded the project \$250,000 in 2013.<sup>223</sup> Research conducted to write the grant resulted in the publication of *The Bibliography of Metropolitan Milwaukee*, edited by Ann Graf, Amanda Seligman, and Margo Anderson, all of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.<sup>224</sup> This auxiliary volume, which contains nearly 2,500 items, is an excellent resource for both *EMKE* entry writers as well as anyone interested in reading about or pursuing further research about the greater Milwaukee area. The work done creating this bibliography sets the stage for a central goal of the project: gathering and synthesizing all the currently-available knowledge about Milwaukee and its metropolitan surrounds. The second and related goal is to make this knowledge and any discovered or newly-created resources available and accessible. Currently being rolled out on a digital platform, *EMKE* shares nearly 750 individual entries about Milwaukee and a four-county area surrounding the city. In addition, and currently in various stages of development and availability, *EMKE* will host resources that augment the information presented in the entries. These accompanying resources will link website users to a curated collection of primary sources, and suggest how the entries could be used in classrooms or other teaching and learning environments.<sup>225</sup>

The form of the urban encyclopedia, itself, responds to the needs of school children and school teachers as well as local history buffs or those researching family genealogies who may be looking for depth or breadth and can find both within the pages (either physical or online). Typically, the volumes contain hundreds, even thousands, of individual entries. Entries in

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223. "Funded Projects Query Form, *The Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*" National Endowment for the Humanities, accessed April 1, 2019, <https://securegrants.neh.gov/publicquery/main.aspx?f=1&gn=PW-51309-13>.

224. Ann M. Graf, Amanda I. Seligman, and Margo Anderson, *Bibliography of Metropolitan Milwaukee* (Wisconsin: Marquette University Press, 2015).

225. I am involved in both projects: at the time of writing this, I serve as the *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee's* Curriculum Developer and assist in the Primary Source Curation project.

*EMKE*, as in other encyclopedias, are grouped thematically and present everything from concise accounts of a location important when attempting to understand the cultural context of the area (such as the roughly 250-word entry on “Holy Hill”), to mid-length essays that provide an expanded discussion of a topic (like the entry on “Washington County,” which runs about one-thousand words), to lengthier essays (the entry titled “Gender” clocks in at about three-thousand words) that provide a broad overview of a larger thematic topic or issue.

The varying scale along with the thematic organization of the entries allows for straightforward investigation of a given topic and promotes further reading to satiate the (inevitable) curiosity that emerges. The format, organization of entries, and (generally) the narrative style are meant to be accessible to researchers typically marginalized by traditional methods of scholarly or academic historical research. This audience includes people interested in family history and in finding greater historical context for the oral histories, letters, and pictures in their family “archive.” However, the encyclopedia is not meant exclusively for a lay audience. Editors of *EMKE* imagined that school children and those holding advanced academic degrees in History, alike, would find the encyclopedia to be a helpful repository of knowledge of the local.<sup>226</sup>

As a resource available exclusively on a digital platform, *EMKE* features several interactive elements not possible in large, stately coffee table books like, for example, the print version of *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*.<sup>227</sup> A distinct feature made possible by the digital mode

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226. Amanda I. Seligman and Margo Anderson, *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee, National Endowment for the Humanities Grant Application* (July 2012).

227. The hardcover edition of *The Encyclopedia of Chicago* clocks in at an impressive 1,104 pages and weighs more than six pounds. The encyclopedia contains more than 1,400 entries written by over 600 authors, James R. Grossman, Ann Durkin Keating, and Janice L. Reiff, *The Encyclopedia of Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). It worth noting that *The Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago* went live in 2005, a year after the print volume was

of presentation, highlighted in the grant application to the NEH, are the so-called “Overbook” and “Underbook.” The application states,

The Underbook will illustrate where historical knowledge comes from with digitized primary sources, footnotes, images, and stories about the process of producing entries and other content. The Overbook will allow the reading public to comment and to engage in the process of critiquing the project, thereby systematically laying the foundation for publicly-informed revisions to the *EMKE*'s content. In short, the mission of the online *EMKE* is to teach about both what we know about the Milwaukee metropolitan area's past as well as how we know it.<sup>228</sup>

Readers are able to comment on the entries and this feature makes up the Overbook element of the project. To date, readers comment infrequently and the editorial staff is discussing how to make this feature more robust. The ability to expand and hide footnotes is, I believe, a highlight of the Underbook feature and the digital format of the encyclopedia, in general. A simple mouse click transforms the entries from an easily-read narrative that many non-academics would feel comfortable engaging with to a heavily-annotated document that reveals the extensive research and source-gathering that went into the creation of each entry. Many of the footnotes include hyperlinked text that connects readers to available digital sources, allowing readers to engage in a facsimile of the research process. Current efforts are underway to link terms and topics within the body of the entries, allowing readers to explore other, related *EMKE* entries.<sup>229</sup> Both linking features help readers to understand that historical narratives - including the places, ideas, and identities that are represented in the *EMKE* entries - are contextualized, complex, and the product of the historian's care and contemplation.<sup>230</sup>

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published, James R. Grossman, Ann Durkin Keating, and Janice L. Reiff, *Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, Newberry Library, 2005) <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org>.

228. Seligman and Anderson, *NEH Grant Application*, 1.

229. This feature will function much in the way that Wikipedia articles provide highlighted and hyperlinked text that directs readers to other relevant Wikipedia articles.

230. Here, I'm drawing language from the influential *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*

In the sections to follow, I will discuss my own involvement with a specific *EMKE* project that seeks to increase the impact of the digital format as well as the lifespan of the project. During the Spring 2019 academic semester at UWM, I was asked to serve as the Curriculum Consultant for *EMKE*. This work gives me the opportunity to continue developing materials for classroom use. A significant difference of this work from that presented in the preceding two chapters, however, is that the products will not have the luxury of being classroom-tested. All other assignments, curricula, or classroom activities I have developed have, in some way, benefitted from being classroom-tested in my own classroom. Thus, working in this new mode of curriculum development calls me to draw from my extensive experience in the classroom, imagining, for example, how students *might* respond to the questions I ask them to consider and the sources I encourage them to interrogate. But I will not be able to know, for example, their responses, the questions they raise, or the learning bottlenecks they encounter.<sup>231</sup> I cannot then strategize in real-time to facilitate and support student learning as I am used to. Therefore, a central theme I will take up in the discussions to follow is unknowability.

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in History article by Thomas Andrews and Flannery Burke. The article, “What Does it Mean to Think Historically,” presents the ‘five C’s’ of historical thinking, habits of mind possessed by practiced historians. These ‘five C’s,’ they argue, should be taught to students of history if our goal is to foster critical engagement and encourage engaged citizenship. This article is discussed at greater length in the Introduction and Literature Review chapters, see Thomas Andrews and Flannery Burke, “What Does it Mean to Think Historically?” *Perspectives* 45(1).

231. Learning bottlenecks, as identified by SoTL scholars Leah Shopkow, Joan Middendorf, and David Pace, refer to locations in teaching and learning where “significant numbers of students are unable to adequately perform essential tasks.” Shopkow, Middendorf, and Pace developed a set of approaches to teaching and learning that addresses these bottlenecks under the umbrella they call “Decoding the Disciplines,” see Joan Middendorf and Leah Shopkow, *Overcoming Student Learning Bottlenecks: Decode the Critical Thinking of Your Discipline* (Stylus, 2017); David Pace, *The Decoding the Disciplines Paradigm: Seven Steps to Increased Student Learning* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017).



Unknowability traverses scale. From my own curriculum development work for a single class to a large, public-facing history project, what remains sure is that both must be responsive to the inevitability of unknowability. *How* and *why* to be responsive to unknowability are questions answered by a combination of theoretical engagement and reflective analysis. This chapter combines these as I discuss my role and process in greater depth and present three distinct curricular plans: one based on *EMKE*'s entry on Holy Hill; one based on *EMKE*'s entry on Increase Lapham; and one for an assignment utilizing entries, data, and resources from *EMKE*, co-developed for a course on information design. Before I do this, I will discuss unknowability as a concept in more detail so it can frame my curricular planning rationale. Then, I will describe my conversations with other teachers, learners, and educational designers in which unknowability and responding to the unknowable emerged as a theme across discussions. In the conclusion to this chapter, I will reflect on this observed trend and begin to discuss the impact of unknowability on public history projects. Much later, in the conclusion to this dissertation, I will discuss the ways in which unknowability in public history projects intersects with efforts to create and maintain well-being.

### **Discussion: Unknowability & Queer Pedagogy**

I first raised the question of unknowability in the literature review chapter. In my discussion of pedagogy, tracing the development of critical and feminist pedagogies, I conclude with a brief paragraph noting an important contribution from queer theory and pedagogy: that unknowability in the classroom exists and must be addressed. In raising this point, I draw from a relatively small group of scholars rooted in queer and feminist theory as well as in multicultural education. Each of the resources I draw from approaches the idea of unknowability from a slightly different angle, noting the impact it has on our practices of teaching and learning. In all

examples, however, the application of queer theory has allowed researchers and writers to interrogate unknowability.

Queer theorists and pedagogues use the term “unknowability,” though they have not developed a clear statement of its meaning. But based on the way they use the term, I use ‘unknowability’ to refer to a state of existence or a state of being - an evaluative assessment of our ability (or lack thereof) to discern, create, or conceive of something. The “unknowable,” in the nominative, points to an idea, identity, or entity that is in some way bounded. The unknowable may emerge/manifest from a gap or silence in the historical record, or from a reticent student unwilling to share some salient aspect of their identity. We can know that we do not know something: this is the unknowable. Stating that the unknowable exists marks the presence of an absence. Something may limit our ability to come to an understanding of that thing or idea we want to know. This frames unknowability. Both unknowability and the unknowable, however, can be in flux and the status can change based on the results of inquiry, research, and knowledge production.

What, then, is unknowable in our spaces of teaching and learning? According to Kristina Llewellyn and Jennifer Llewellyn in their chapter that contributes to the edited volume *Feminist Pedagogy in Higher Education*, teacher and learner identities are often unknowable. Because identities are fractured, intersecting, and multiple, they argue, sites of teaching and learning must prioritize teacher:learner relationships within the classroom and remain decidedly flexible.<sup>232</sup> They suggest that because, “a professor cannot fully know, for example, how to teach about

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232. Kristina Llewellyn and Jennifer Llewellyn, “A Restorative Approach to Learning: Relational Theory as Feminist Pedagogy in Universities,” in *Feminist Pedagogy in Higher Education: Critical Theory and Practice*, eds. Tracy Penny Light, Jane Nicholas, and Renee Bondy (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2015).

human rights before working with students to understand the different subject positions, histories, and experiences of oppression that may produce fear, ambition, and/or hope in the classroom,” instructors must pay careful attention to unknown facts of student identity to, at the base, ensure safety. While the writers don’t suggest how this necessary flexibility can be enacted, and instead call for further theorizing, they provide an important reflection on how teacher and learners must both recognize and come to critically engage with identity in the classroom.

Llewellyn and Llewellyn’s observations follow ideas posited by feminist theorists, ones which gained significant academic traction in the 1980s. Feminist theorists as well as sociologists maintain that identities - including gender, race, class, and even sex - are socially-constructed and are subject to change over time. Both anticipating and building from this perspective, grassroots activist-scholars from the Combahee River Collective as well as feminist and legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw describe how identities intersect, fixing individuals in relationships and locations dictated by power, privilege, and oppression.<sup>233</sup> Susan Luhmann and Kevin Kumashiro draw from these insights and incorporate a queer pedagogical stance in their research and theorizing. They emphasize the necessity of accounting for complex identities for all individuals within the classroom. The failure to do so, they posit, allows for the very dangerous possibility of upholding and perpetuating a wide array of prejudices and oppressive

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233. See “The Combahee River Collective Statement, Combahee River Collective, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://combaheerivercollective.weebly.com/the-combahee-river-collective-statement.html>; Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color, *Stanford Law Review* 43, (1990): 1241; for a critical discussion on how intersectionality has been taken up in classroom and activist settings and how mainstream use of the term often erases the fact that emerges from the scholarship and activism of feminists of color, see Merry Wiesner-Hanks, “Early Modern Intersectionalities and Activism,” Society for the Study of Early Modern Women, accessed February 1, 2019, [http://ssemw.org/blog/wiesner\\_hanks/](http://ssemw.org/blog/wiesner_hanks/).

conditions.<sup>234</sup> We must take care, then, to acknowledge identities (even if we cannot always know them exactly) if we wish to maintain equitable spaces for teaching and learning. This calls curriculum developers to incorporate learning modalities for a variety of abilities as well as to ensure that a broad range of identities are visible in the content we present. Developing inclusive pedagogy does not just stop with these examples, but are examples of a pedagogical stance that calls for constant revision and reorientation, if we wish to teach for, with, and to all members of a classroom community.<sup>235</sup>

In the chapter “Queering/Querying Pedagogy: Or, Pedagogy is a Pretty Queer Thing,” Susan Luhmann attempts an application of queer theory to practices of teaching and learning to unsettle what knowledge is: how we teach, how we learn, how we know. Luhmann concludes that even knowledge may be unknowable, unintelligible, or absent. And because we may not be certain of the subject or object of our teaching, perhaps because we have unsettled categories that frame knowledge or the process of knowledge production itself, we must remain flexible. Luhmann emphasizes that exploration of the unknowable is an inherently messy process. Preparing to be unprepared - another way of suggesting that we recognize the unknowable and acknowledge unknowability - is the pedagogical strategy Luhmann proposes.<sup>236</sup>

Digging into the messiness and crisis that can erupt when we question that which we do not know about teaching, learning, *and* ourselves, Kevin Kumashiro offers a pedagogical model

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234. Susanne Luhmann, “Queering/Querying Pedagogy: Or Pedagogy is a Pretty Queer Thing,” in *Queer Theory in Education*, ed. William F. Pinar (New York: Routledge, 1998) 141-156; Kevin Kumashiro, *Troubling Education: Queer Activism and Antioppressive Pedagogy* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

235. For an example of an explicit call for inclusive teaching and learning practices, see Kevin Gannon, “The Case for Inclusive Teaching.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 27, 2018. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Case-for-Inclusive/242636>.

236. Luhmann, “Queering/Querying Pedagogy.”

that aims to disrupt oppressive systems and how those systems manifest in academic spaces. In *Troubling Education: Queer Activism and Anti-Oppressive Pedagogy*, Kumashiro calls readers to “[look] beyond the theories and methods that we already know.”<sup>237</sup> Kumashiro acknowledges the prospect that the theories and methods we require to disrupt oppressive systems may, themselves, be unknowable. The aim of the text, Kumashiro explains, is to provide resources to assist in the (necessary) rethinking of teaching practices. However, these may not be the lesson plans and curricular guides - even whole websites devoted to scaffolding student investigation of a topic, person, or event - that ‘resources’ typically refers to. The resources Kumashiro offers include everything from interview transcripts to poetry which are meant to be read multiple times, each reading offering partial access to a larger goal or idea. Through the unconventional and iterative encounters, Kumashiro hopes to emphasize the *process* of reading and not just the singular act of reading to gain knowledge of content. This process fosters the development of new skills and approaches, teaching students particular disciplinary practices and habits of mind. Routine accumulation of partial knowledges models the process of learning that Kumashiro suggests: that of working through crisis. Kevin Kumashiro suggests, in working through crisis, that significant liberatory education occurs.

As the varied academic responses I reference here reflect, noting the existence of the unknowable and unknowability and broadcasting a call for pedagogical action is complex and requires more than just simple recognition and response. To be sure, recognizing that the unknowable and unknowability exist is the first step; wrestling with what to do with this insight is the pressing matter at hand for teachers and learners. Literature addressing these issues varies in what it attempts to take on, as I have illustrated above. While it builds from and extends the

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237. Kumashiro, *Troubling Education*.

relatively significant work of critical and feminist pedagogies, queer pedagogy is still a relatively nascent subfield.

The assessments and recommendations I offer here about how to address or treat the unknowable and unknowability reflect the fact that this topic is undertheorized. Scholarship is severely lacking in terms examples of curriculum development in higher education, offering resources for other teachers and learners who want to take a similar approach. Of the examples of scholarship presented above, only Kumashiro's comes close. Kumashiro draws from first-person narratives, classroom examples, and includes the work of activists (not just teachers and learners in the conventional sense) to grapple with the unknown or, perhaps, unknowable theories and methods that might assist in efforts to cast off the yoke of oppressive systems within contexts of teaching and learning. The other two examples, while helpful, contribute only to our theoretical discussions about what might or could happen in classroom spaces once we begin to mark the presence of an absence. Here, what's unknowable is how the theoretical suggestions may play out in instances of praxis.

If understanding how theories about unknowability might actually operate are difficult for the classroom, they are even more difficult in public history projects. I know who is in my classroom (and make concerted efforts to know more than just the names of those in my classroom, whether face-to-face or online), but I have no idea who might elect to engage further after reading the Holy Hill entry, for example. I cannot anticipate whether this hypothetical person is an instructor looking for lesson plan ideas or a community member interested in engaging further with the content and resources available on the *EMKE* website simply out of curiosity. Developing curricula for a large public history project means that the resources I create

have the capacity for reaching a large, public audience - a platform far more extensive than the twenty to forty-person classrooms I am used to.

When I design curriculum for use in my own classroom, I can ask questions and make observations in order to better understand how students are positioned - this allows me to adjust my pedagogical approach to account for their interests, preferred learning styles, identities, and safety. However, I cannot foresee a method that would allow for suggesting such granular modifications in a large-scale public history project, one that is available to and utilized by a generally unknowable audience. Certainly, there is room for incorporating inclusive teaching and learning practices, drawing from diverse sources and additional resources, and even engaging in some stealth feminism; I can bake my preferred pedagogical frameworks into the cake, as it were.<sup>238</sup> Still, attending to student needs in the ways I think are pedagogically appropriate is simply untenable in my role as *EMKE* curriculum developer.

As I share in the introduction to this chapter, because I am without the benefit of classroom-testing curriculum, I rely on my own teaching and learning experience as well as a host of resources. I draw from SoTL scholarship and other active and history-focused digital projects that attract a public audience. In the conclusion to this work, I'll offer insight regarding unknowability and well-being. For now, recognizing that the unknowable exists and that unknowability is inevitable helps to frame my approach for designing curriculum. Working to mitigate the unknowable, I set out to learn more about teachers, learners, and initiatives utilizing *EMKE* resources - notes on and the reflections on this effort follow directly.

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238. For further information about “stealth feminism” and its potential in the classroom, see Nicole Laliberté, Alison Bain, Greg Lankenau, Michele Bolduc, Anna Mansson McGinty, and Kristin Sziarto, “The Controversy Capital of Stealth Feminism in Higher Education” *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 16, no. 1 (2017).

## Designing Assignments for a Public History Project

During the Spring 2019 academic semester at UWM, I was asked to serve as the Curriculum Consultant for *EMKE*, a public history project hosted on a digital platform. I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter that I have worked in several capacities for the project, including as fact-checker, research assistant, and entry writer. This employment history, along with my research and teaching experience, positioned me to take on the role. As Curriculum Consultant, I was tasked with developing curricular resources to be used in conjunction with *EMKE* entries and resources. Working to extend the life of the *EMKE* project, Senior Editor Amanda Seligman and Project Director Joe Walzer (hereto referred to as ‘the editorial team’) identified several grants that would fund auxiliary and/or complementary projects meant to bring *EMKE* entries and resources into classrooms and living rooms. Primarily, my work was to involve developing curricula to contribute to the proof of concept for the grant applications. Given my teaching experience and the focus of my research, I would create curricula for the higher ed context, focusing on introductory-level history courses. The proof of concept component I would contribute to would, in theory, fund the position of Curriculum Consultant in earnest.

A primary goal of my work, as outlined by the editorial team, would be to create a curricular framework that could easily be replicated so that in the future other instructors or curriculum designers would have a straightforward way of contributing to the greater *EMKE* curriculum design project. Creating a framework and providing this information to others could further several initiatives, we thought. First, it would streamline my work creating the first several examples, an element that could be useful given the tight time frame (one fifteen-week academic semester) and the fact that I would likely not have the opportunity to classroom-test



what I produced. Next, it could serve strengthen our proof of concept piece and illustrate to the granting organization/s that a structure was in place to support further curricular design efforts - evidence that we were forward-thinking with our project. Finally, given the potential for a large pool of potential curriculum contributors (others at UWM and other local institutions of higher education interested in or already utilizing *EMKE* resources in their classrooms) and array of teachers and learners we hoped the curricula would reach, a pattern or formula would be helpful to make future (or even existing) curricula intelligible to and useful for other teachers and learners. The main thrust of my work, then, would be to create and follow a framework so that any curricula developed (by myself or others) responded to the needs of and would be accessible to teachers and learners.<sup>239</sup>

Because I was not also teaching a course into which I could test out the assignments, discussion prompts, or guides for critical inquiry that I was in the process of developing, I looked to members of my campus community who were. One of my first tasks, then, was to identify and then interview staff and faculty on campus currently using or interested in utilizing *EMKE* in their teaching and learning. I anticipated that I had much to learn from those who had already undertaken a curriculum design process and, for those who had not yet created anything, I could use insights from our conversation to inform my future work. Anecdotal, word-of-mouth evidence as well as an observed uptick in website visits indicated that folks on campus were - or

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239. To develop this framework, I looked to other available models and drew significantly from “World History Matters,” a website created and hosted by the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University, “World History Matters,” Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, accessed February 1, 2019, <http://worldhistorymatters.org/>. I am aware that as of writing this, this website (last updated in 2009) is going through an extensive redesign, as funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Following this update, the website will be known as “World History Commons.”

were at least talking about - putting *EMKE* to work in the classroom. My conversations with these prospective instructors, I decided with the editorial team (Seligman and Walzer), would help shape how I would develop curricula that incorporated entries and resources from the digital version of *EMKE*. This would be done, in part, by reflecting on the needs individual instructors indicated. Additionally, I would critically engage with their feedback and explicated needs, putting this information in conversation with best practices in history education, the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) and History SoTL.<sup>240</sup>

My conversations with UWM staff and faculty greatly informs my own approach to developing curricula to be used in conjunction with *EMKE* entries and resources. Based on outcomes from these interviews, and including my own curriculum work, I identify four distinct approaches:

- Not utilizing *EMKE* in classroom context, but interested or considering in doing so
- Utilizing or directing use of *EMKE* in classroom context, but did not collaborate with *EMKE* staff and/or editors to develop curriculum
- Utilizing *EMKE* in classroom context, in collaboration with *EMKE* staff and/or editors
- Proposed use of *EMKE* in classroom context, but curriculum not classroom-tested

As noted above, my categorization of these approaches includes information about three important factors:

- Curriculum utilizing *EMKE* resources currently in use
- *EMKE* resources classroom-tested
- Curriculum co-created with *EMKE* staff and/or editors

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240. While it may seem redundant to name each of these subfields separately, I do so because each group identifies in this way. I acknowledge (as would many of the teacher-scholars contributing to conversations within the subfields, I suspect) significant crossover and that scholarship in one subfield draws from and reinforces insight and recommendations proposed by scholarship in the other subfields.

Having knowledge of these approaches I identify, along with context from my discussions, is useful as I must anticipate teacher and learner needs, interests, and points of resistance, among other unknowable aspects.

In practice, my efforts to identify those interested or already using *EMKE* content turned up a handful of instructors and curriculum designers - a highly engaged sample who were eager to discuss both why and how they incorporated (or might be interested in incorporating) resources available through the *EMKE* digital platform. During the first half of the semester I conducted four meetings. In those meetings, I interviewed people involved in three separate *EMKE*-related projects. At the outset of those interviews, I aimed to gather information about several critical questions to understand how *EMKE* could better support both teachers (by offering accessible teaching and learning guides and resources) and learners (by reflecting student needs, interests, and identities - based on feedback from instructors/interlocutors - in the curricula I would develop). These questions included: “what might be keeping instructors from utilizing *EMKE* resources or incorporating *EMKE* in their classrooms?” and “what propels an instructor to incorporate *EMKE* resources in their class and curriculum development?” Both of these questions interrogate motivation and reflect my feeling that *EMKE*, a digital repository of information, is an under-utilized resource and that *EMKE* staff and faculty are under-utilized collaborators within the context of UWM. The questions also reflected that status of known interviewees; at the start of the semester, I was told that at least one instructor (who I later interviewed) shared with an *EMKE* editor that they didn’t know how to approach incorporating *EMKE* resources. As stated above, there was word-of-mouth evidence that at least one instructor used *EMKE* resources in their class, but the details of this use were not known. Additionally, I was forwarded email correspondence from an instructor who contacted the *EMKE* editorial team,

requesting support for an assignment they wanted to develop. As acting Curriculum Consultant, it made the most sense for me to take the lead on this task. In all arenas, I set out to learn more.

Before my tenure as Curriculum Consultant even began in the Spring 2019 semester, I arranged to meet with English instructor Dani DeVasto. During the preceding semester break, DeVasto contacted the *EMKE* editorial staff via email, explaining that she intended to draw from *EMKE* to build an assignment that asked students to create infographics. Responsibility for following up on this request was immediately turned over to me and I began what would be a nearly semester-long collaboration with DeVasto at the start of the semester. Given the scope of the project we undertook together, I dedicate a full section of this chapter to present that narrative; I present a full discussion there.

Next, I arranged to meet with Kristin Woodward, Nicole Bungert, and Heidi Anoszko, all librarians at UWM's Golda Meir Library to discuss their experiences developing course curricula that incorporated resources from *EMKE*. I was made aware of this work also through email correspondence routed to me from the *EMKE* editorial team. This time, the connection was made when Heidi Anoszko, recently hired as the Instructional Design Librarian at UWM's Golda Meir Library, contacted Amanda Seligman early in the Spring 2019 semester to ask a clarifying question regarding citation practices with the *EMKE* entries. After several exchanges via email that fleshed out a few more details about why Anoszko was asking about the entries, Seligman explained that I was doing pedagogy work with the project and that she wanted to connect me with the folks involved in the effort.

In the meeting that was arranged shortly thereafter, I learned that Woodward and Bungert worked with Shevaun Watson, Associate Professor of English and Director of the Writing Program at UWM, to redesign the curriculum for English 102 (ENG 102): College Writing and

Research.<sup>241</sup> The librarians I met with described the impetus for this curricular overhaul, explaining that a desire to “localize” the curriculum and tie course content and assignments to knowledge of events, places, and landmarks that would be familiar to UWM students. Given that *EMKE* is a repository of information about the context local to UWM, it seemed a natural fit, they stated, to turn to this resource. Incorporating resources from *EMKE* helped designers achieve other learning goals, they shared, including helping students to reconceptualize authority and in framing “public-facing information products,” assignments which accompany each of the course’s four “segments” (or units) and make up a majority of the course grade. What is notable about this collaboration, considering that they incorporated *EMKE*, is that collaborating team did so without requesting any support from *EMKE* staff or editors. The second semester of ENG 102 that utilized *EMKE* resources was well underway by the time of our meeting. However, it was the first time that the curriculum developers and a representative from the project discussed how the digital encyclopedia was being used within this classroom context and how *EMKE* staff might support such a massive undertaking.

ENG 102 is a required course for UWM students, though at the time of writing this, it is possible for incoming students to illustrate their writing and research proficiency and test out of the course.<sup>242</sup> Still, nearly all students who attend UWM enroll in ENG 102 (as well as English 100: Introduction to College Reading and Writing and English 101: Introduction to College

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241. However, Shevaun Watson was unable to attend this first meeting. Newly hired as an Instructional Design Librarian, Heidi Anoszko did not contribute to the initial collaboration that produced the curriculum under discussion. She does, however, support current implementation efforts.

242. According to UWM’s Academic Catalog, English 102 fulfills Part A of the Oral and Written Communication (OWC) Competency, a General Education Requirement necessary for graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree, “Undergraduate Policies,” University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, accessed April 9, 2019, <https://catalog.uwm.edu/policies/undergraduate-policies/#generaleducationtext>.

Writing) in their first year. The first year writing sequence aims to instruct students to become critical readers and writers who understand research and writing as an iterative and reflective process.<sup>243</sup>

The ENG 102 curriculum, as developed in collaboration, significantly draws from information literacy pedagogy, particularly the “Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education,” developed and made available by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL).<sup>244</sup> The ACRL defines information literacy as, “the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information,” and emphasizes that librarians and faculty members alike must seek to develop this skill in students.<sup>245</sup> Goals in the ACRL framework ask librarians and librarian-faculty teams to facilitate students’ understanding of the following:

- Authority Is Constructed and Contextual
- Information Creation as a Process
- Information Has Value
- Research as Inquiry
- Scholarship as Conversation
- Searching as Strategic Exploration

A passage from the introduction to the “Framework” document stands out to me as describing the genesis of the collaboration I was learning more about: “...librarians have a greater responsibility in identifying core ideas within their own knowledge domain that can extend learning for students, in creating a new cohesive curriculum for information literacy, and in collaborating more extensively with faculty.” In this example of a group of librarians collaborating with a faculty member to re-design a curriculum, I observe, is an example of

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243. “English 100/101/102,” University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, accessed March 14, 2019, <https://uwm.edu/english/undergraduate/resources/english-100101102/>.

244. “Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education,” Association of College and Research Libraries, accessed April 9, 2019, <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>.

245. “Information Literacy Glossary,” Association of College and Research Libraries, accessed April 9, 2019, <http://www.ala.org/acrl/issues/infolit/overview/glossary>.

librarians doing this very work. The sheer scope of this project is remarkable, as well, as nearly two-thousand students have enrolled in ENG 102 courses that use this revised curriculum.<sup>246</sup>

The approach to teaching and learning promoted by ACRL aligns, in part, with “Shared Learning Goals for Baccalaureate Students,” a framework created by the University of Wisconsin System (UWS). The goals include (emphasis theirs):

- **Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Natural World** including breadth of knowledge and the ability to think beyond one’s discipline, major, or area of concentration. This knowledge can be gained through the study of the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, and social sciences.
- **Critical and Creative Thinking Skills** including inquiry, problem solving, and higher order qualitative and quantitative reasoning.
- **Effective Communication Skills** including listening, speaking, reading, writing, and information literacy.
- **Intercultural knowledge and competence** including the ability to interact and work with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures; to lead or contribute support to those who lead; and to empathize with and understand those who are different than they are.
- **Individual, Social and Environmental Responsibility** including civic knowledge and engagement (both local and global), ethical reasoning, and action.

According to the document, “these goals provide a framework to communicate the meaning and value of a college education to students, parents, and the broader community,” and “provide support to faculty, instructional and academic staff to become more intentional in their teaching, learning, and extra-curricular activities.”<sup>247</sup> ENG 102, a course required for graduating with a baccalaureate degree from UWM, would then have to follow the spirit of these goals. The goals laid out by UWS and the framework put forth by ACRL both encourage teachers (including librarians and faculty) to instill in students a sense of responsibility regarding their involvement with forms of knowledge production in the wider world. I contend that the ACRL framework has

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246. This data is from email correspondence with Shevaun Watson. In March 2019, Watson shared that, to-date, UWM has offered 83 sections of ENG 102 (38 in Fall 2018 and 45 in Spring 2019). Each section, on average, enrolls twenty-four students. 35 instructors (including graduate teaching assistants - usually graduate students in the English department) led these sections.

247. “Framework for Information Literacy.”

the most significant overlap with a combination of two UWS goals: that students develop effective communication skills (which explicitly mentions information literacy in the text explaining the goal) and that they develop individual, social, and environmental responsibility.

A significant portion of my conversation with the ENG 102 curriculum team was devoted to interrogating the theoretical and pedagogical underpinnings of the choices made in the curriculum design process, which is one reason that I devote time and space here to provide context about the paradigms in use. At several points in our discussion, Kristin noted where insight from ACRL's teaching guide directly informed the choices they were making as they designed assignments, discussion prompts, and lesson plans to be used by the ENG 102 instructors. Though she made no reference of the UW System's "Shared Learning Goals" framework, the overlap I noted above means that ENG 102 students are thereby strategically positioned to meet learning goals set forth by both frameworks.

The curriculum team then shared more with me about how and why they turned to *EMKE* as a source of knowledge of the local. In segment three, titled "Made in Milwaukee," the curriculum packet available on a share drive for all ENG 102 instructors informs teachers and learners that they will focus on a specific goal from the ACRL framework: "Authority is Constructed and Contextual." A central component of the segment is preparing students for and then completing what is called the Taxonomy activity. In practice, I observe, this activity helps students meet several goals from the ACRL framework, not just the one earmarked - I will discuss this point and provide a specific example after introducing the assignment.

In brief, the Taxonomy activity asks students to choose several articles (three to four) within a single subject, as outlined on the *EMKE* website. Curriculum designers designated that students should choose articles from the subject titled "Business, Industry, Labor, and



Agriculture.” In the present day, there are sixty entries available under this subject heading.<sup>248</sup> After reading the articles, they are asked to reclassify the articles they chose under a new, self-created subject - a new taxonomy. For example, I could re-classify the entry titled “Commercial Fishing”<sup>249</sup> based on the content presented in the narrative and suggest that it could be newly classified under the subject heading “Local Food” given the fact that Milwaukee’s local-focused fishing industry provided the foodstuffs for a local tradition: the Friday night fish fry. After identifying new taxonomies, students complete an active learning activity. Here, they write the new subject headings on small pieces of paper and then are challenged to re-classify the entries their classmates chose, using the new subject headings. The new subject headings then provide the basis for the next assignment: a small-group project in which students seek out several other *EMKE* entries not yet mentioned that could fit under the new taxonomy and complete another activity (which I won’t address here). It is important to note that the taxonomy activity feeds into another assignment, however, to illustrate that curriculum incorporates iterative and recursive elements, both important in impacting long-term and deep learning.

In early March, I had the opportunity to talk with Joni Hayward, an ENG 102 instructor who had just facilitated the Taxonomy activity. In this conversation, Hayward walked me through the steps of how this activity played out in her classroom. Though it wasn’t outlined in the curriculum as delivered, Hayward decided to take a class period to model the Taxonomy activity for her students; using the entry on Master Lock,<sup>250</sup> the students worked through the full

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248. “Browse by Subject: Business, Industry, Labor, and Agriculture,” *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, accessed April 9, 2019, <https://emke.uwm.edu/rubrics/?rubric=business-industry-labor-and-agriculture>.

249. Joseph B. Walzer, “Commercial Fishing,” in *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, edited by Amanda Seligman and Margo Anderson (Encyclopedia of Milwaukee, 2016), <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/commercial-fishing>.

250. Jenna Jacobs, “Master Lock, LLC,” in *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, edited by Amanda

exercise together. Despite this careful scaffolding, Hayward reported that she intervened more than anticipated when the students completed the exercise, as written. This intervention included helping students to see the value of asking critical questions, emphasizing that the act of asking and developing the skills of critical inquiry may be more helpful to the learning process than merely getting to the “answer.” For example, Hayward told me, as students struggled to develop new taxonomy for the entries, she encouraged them to think about what questions they could ask to make the entry relevant: for themselves, a population, or a particular research initiative. Relevancy (to student lives and experiences) was an especially critical point here, Hayward remarked, and a place where drawing from *EMKE* entries was particularly advantageous. Often, because there is some level of familiarity with the content, topic, or ideas in the entries, students have an easier time drawing from their own experiences as they approach the task at hand. This relevancy/proximity to the entry content helped students develop new (and surprising) taxonomies, Hayward shared. For instance, students suggested the new subject heading “Tourism and Entertainment” as they read through entries within the *EMKE* subject heading “Business, Industry, Labor, and Agriculture,” suggesting that the entries for Brewing and Harley Davidson could both be re-categorized within this proposed taxonomy.<sup>251</sup> Here, students drew from their knowledge of the robust tourism industry both companies have created in the recent decades.<sup>252</sup>

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Seligman and Margo Anderson (Encyclopedia of Milwaukee, 2016), <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/master-lock-company-llc/>.

251. Joseph B. Walzer, “Brewing,” in *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, edited by Amanda Seligman and Margo Anderson (Encyclopedia of Milwaukee, 2016), <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/brewing>; Matthew Costello, “Harley-Davidson,” in *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, edited by Amanda Seligman and Margo Anderson (Encyclopedia of Milwaukee, 2016), <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/harley-davidson>.

252. Tourism is currently the second-largest industry in Wisconsin, falling just behind Agriculture, and Milwaukee makes up nearly a quarter of the state’s tourism market. User-generated content from the website TripAdvisor names the Harley-Davidson Museum, Miller Brewery Tour, and Lakefront Brewery (a popular craft brewery) as both “Traveler Favorites,”

This is likely information students would be unaware of if they were not able to draw from lived experience within Milwaukee.

Drawing from local knowledge was an important part of our conversation when I spoke with Rachel Buff, Professor of History and Director of the Cultures and Communities (CC) Program at UWM. From the outset, I was aware that Buff did not incorporate *EMKE* entries in her curricula. This struck me as odd, as Buff directs the campus unit that offers a certificate in CC, a community-based learning initiative that centers student-community partnerships in Milwaukee. Knowing the hyper-local focus of CC, I aimed to learn more about why incorporating *EMKE* resources was not, in practice, the natural fit I assumed it would be. In our conversation I learned that a primary motivating element for Buff seemed to be interrogating where her students obtained information: on what platforms their learning was taking place, and where they were processing both that content as well as the skills that allowed them to intake that content in the first place. Acknowledging that, increasingly, this is taking place on the internet and social media (especially Twitter), Buff expressed concern that when her students inevitably accessed and processed information in these locations, that they were not prepared; they did not possess the tools that would allow them to discern accuracy, validity, and authority. She was concerned that they were severely lacking in information literacy skills. Or, at the very least, she doesn't know their aptitude.

While my conversation with Buff did not result in any concrete curriculum plans, it did emphasize to me that anything I would design should include source-critical elements. This

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and “Top Things To Do,” see “Tourism and Hospitality,” Visit Milwaukee, accessed April 10, 2019, <https://www.visitmilwaukee.org/about-mke/innovation-industry/tourism-hospitality/>; “Things to do in Milwaukee,” TripAdvisor, accessed April 10, 2019, [https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g60097-Activities-Milwaukee\\_Wisconsin.html#ATTRACTION\\_SORT\\_WRAPPER](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g60097-Activities-Milwaukee_Wisconsin.html#ATTRACTION_SORT_WRAPPER).

approach allows for teachers and learners to rely on and draw from what is present in the entries and resources *and* point to what/who/where is not included - those elements that are the unknowable. An important takeaway from all the discussions I highlight above is that one must have some knowledge of a topic before it is possible to conceptualize what or who is missing or silenced. Knowledge of that which is unknown (or is not represented) is required to begin the process of being made known. This point is applicable to the kind of source-critical work Buff and I discussed as well as to my own work here to develop engaging, accessible curricula to accompany *EMKE* entries and resources. The following frameworks, learning objectives, and assignment directives are meant for use within a higher education classroom and aim, through linking a public history project with classrooms, to support efforts that teach to, with, and for a diverse audience of teachers and learners. In the sections to follow, I will offer these resources as well as critical reflections of the work I completed. I keep in mind unknowability and the unknowable as I reflect on both how and why I developed the examples I present.

### **Experiments in Education**

The language used to describe teaching and learning resources like the ones I offer here varies widely, though the terms and titles often fit squarely within the language of formal education. Web-based resources I have used in my own classroom and consult here for available frameworks to create and present curricula and other teaching and learning resources include Wisconsin 101 and World History Matters (specifically, the “Women in World History” page). Both projects use classroom-centric language, including terms like “lesson plan” and “module,” and invite an exclusive, classroom-based audience to explore such resources with a tab, for example, called “For Educators.” Clearly, there is nothing wrong with inviting an academic, classroom-based audience to access resources meant to facilitate teaching and learning and I

appreciate that such resources are available and visible on a public-facing website like that of Wisconsin 101. With the opportunity, however, to expand how curriculum developers can think about the audience of such resources and with the recognition that people who do not identify as students might be interested in exploring the curricula I develop, I aimed to find a more inclusive or inviting term to refer to the teaching and learning resources.

After time and consideration and a number of conversations with colleagues and potential resource users, I strategically chose to call each resource here an “Experiment in Education.” I did so for several reasons in addition to simply indicating to visitors of *EMKE*’s digital platform that such educational resources exist. First, I like that the word “experiment” can be read as either a noun or a verb. Importantly, in the verbal sense, it implies action one can take to further one’s education: pursue further resources and further knowledge. As opposed to simply naming the resources, the phrase “experiment in education,” read as an imperative, calls teachers and learners to act, contribute to, and be part of the learning process. The second reason is that I was inspired to use the title after I found that Mary Alling-Aber used the term in the early 1880s to name her own object-based teaching approach. Building from the object-based curriculum she became familiar with while attending the Oswego Normal School, as well as critiquing formulations of object lessons that did *not* ask students to build from “[their] actual experiences, curiosity, or knowledge,” Alling-Aber developed her own curriculum “organized around real-world observations.”<sup>253</sup> In Sarah Anne Carter’s assessment, the lessons Alling-Aber developed, “served to teach patterns of thinking with and through objects...[and] strengthened [students’] perceptive abilities.” Urging her students to practice what many SoTL scholars call “historical thinking,” Alling-Aber reflected on the outcomes of her teaching practice and noted that,

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253. Carter, *Object Lessons*, 57.

“students learned to ask questions.”<sup>254</sup> My own work developing curriculum prioritizes these same teaching and learning goals and the curriculum I offer here similarly scaffolds the development of disciplinary ways of thinking in history.

While there are a number of excellent contemporary frameworks available for use within SoTL in History,<sup>255</sup> I turn to the “Measuring College Learning in History” white paper written by Lendol Calder and Tracy Steffes, made available in May 2016<sup>256</sup>. Calder and Steffes’ paradigm indicates “essential concepts and competencies” that a broad range of history faculty, when surveyed, indicated were fundamental to the discipline of history. Teaching and learning directed toward these essential concepts and competencies means “students should develop a deep understanding of history as an interpretive account, the relationship of past and present, historical evidence, complex causality, and historical significance. In addition to mastering these essential concepts, today’s history undergraduates should learn how to evaluate historical accounts, interpret primary sources, apply chronological reasoning, contextualize, and construct acceptable historical accounts.” I intend that my work here will provide a kind of case study and extend the conversation of the “concepts and competencies” framework for teaching and learning history in higher education. Each Experiment in Education clearly indicates which concepts and/or competencies are targeted. Because “Experiment in Education” offers a replicable framework for curriculum development with *EMKE* entries and resources, my own modeling

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254. Carter, *Object Lessons*, 59.

255. See “Tuning the History Discipline in the United States,” American Historical Association, accessed May 9, 2019, <https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/tuning-the-history-discipline>; Thomas Andrews and Flannery Burke, “What Does It Mean to Think Historically?” *Perspectives* 45.1 (2007): 32-35.

256. Lendol Calder and Tracy Steffes, “Measuring College Learning in History,” in *Improving Quality in American Higher Education: Learning Outcomes and Assessments for the 21st Century*, eds. Richard Arum, Josipa Roska, and Amanda Cook (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2016), 37-86.

encourages other curriculum developers to similarly indicate concepts and/or competencies their own contributions target.

The Experiments in Education generally present an entry from *EMKE* as the starting point. Because I seek to offer resources to teachers and learners that are more than simple expansions on or close readings of a single entry, I also call teachers and learners to look to or incorporate other sources and/or bodies of knowledge, some of which are also available on the *EMKE* digital platform. I intend, direct, and anticipate that teachers and learners will draw, in some way, from each of the following when engaging with an activity, assignment, or discussion I offer in every “Experiment in Education”:

- The text of the *EMKE* entry, indicated in the title of the Experiment in Education.<sup>257</sup>
- The information in “Footnotes” and “For Further Reading,” both of which are listed under the body of the entry text.
- The resources available on the *EMKE* digital platform, including images, maps, and videos. If available, these resources are linked under the “Explore More” heading which follows the body of the entry text. Additionally, users can browse all available images and maps by navigating to the “Media” or “Maps” tabs in the website banner.
- Their own positionality and situated-ness, including: identities, knowledge or insight gained from inhabiting particular identities, physical location, sense of place/location, and prior knowledge.

Each of the Experiment in Education guides I offer here includes videos, as I indicated above.<sup>258</sup> In each instance, the videos I create as part of my *EMKE* curriculum development work put material culture - objects, landscapes, architecture, stuff - in conversation with resources already available on the *EMKE* digital platform - text entries, images, and maps. In other places in this dissertation (chapters three and four), I present professionally filmed and edited teaching and learning video resources. In order to demonstrate that people with minimal video recording

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257. For example, “Experiment in Education: Increase Lapham” directs teachers and learners to begin with the *EMKE* entry on Increase Lapham.

258. As in other chapters here, I categorize these videos as “teaching and learning video resources,” a significant part of this multi-modal dissertation.

and editing skills and access to only basic resources and recording equipment could create something for use within the classroom, I forewent any outside funding requests and attempted to make the videos for this chapter myself.<sup>259</sup>

The outline for each “Experiment in Education” is as follows:

1. Introduction
  - The Introduction explicitly names the *EMKE* entry or entries to be investigated, built from, or otherwise centralized. In this section, curriculum developers provide a narrative that gives any important historical, social, political, artistic, etc. context that is necessary to consider.
2. Sources
  - Here, curriculum developers list all sources to be considered along with links or instructions for how to obtain access to said sources. This section will identify sources available through the *EMKE* digital platform (images and maps), and indicate any other sources necessary for completing the work as outlined in the Lesson Plan.
3. Teaching and Learning Strategies
  - This section offers suggestions for related readings and other external sources (articles, chapter readings, passages, etc.) that help frame the learning objects or assignment goals outlined in the Lesson Plan and provide links or instructions for how to obtain access to said sources. Indicated external sources may be intended solely for an instructor (for example, a SoTL article or chapter that explains a particular teaching device or active learning strategy) or for both teachers and learners (for example, a chapter, video, or audio clip that provides illustrates a particular mode of knowledge production), and should be labeled as such. Additionally, this section provides suggestions for issuing trigger or content warnings, creating and maintaining an inclusive learning space, and any other suggestions meant to ensure safety in the classroom.
4. Lesson Plan [Intended grade/ability level]
  - In parentheses after the title, the curriculum developer indicates the intended classroom setting by stating the grade level/course type the lesson plan is aimed for (in the example I provide, I indicate the course number and title). This section lists the requisite amount of time and number of class periods to complete (from a single class period, part of a class period, to a semester-long scaffolded project), a list of learning objectives and/or intended learning outcomes (in the examples I provide, as informed by Calder and Steffes), all necessary materials (including articles, sources, classroom supplies like paper or markers), and technology suggestions and/or requirements. Then, a step-by-step or task-by-task outline guides the presentation of the lesson. When applicable, the curriculum developer

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259. The Chipstone Foundation generously provided funds for all costs associated with “Creating *The Supper Club*” and “Memory Keepers,” the other teaching and learning video resources I created and present as part of this dissertation.



suggests possible modifications based on grade level, course number, and other applicable course details (for example, how the lesson could be modified for an upper-level or introductory-level course).

5. Resources

- This section includes a bibliography, any additional resources (in the examples I provide, the “How I Did This” videos) and any assessment schemes or rubrics that may accompany an assignment. Additionally, this section provides information about the curriculum developer/s including how to give credit to or be in contact with them.

The specific Experiments in Education for Holy Hill and Increase Lapham, which follow this model, may be found in Appendix Q and Appendix R, respectively.

### ***EMKE* Assignment in Collaboration**

Along with developing Experiments for Education on my own, I also created some assignments for *EMKE* in collaboration with other instructors. Shortly before the start of the Spring 2019 academic semester an instructor in the English Department, Dani DeVasto, contacted editors of *EMKE* to ask about support for an assignment she was developing for a course she was set to teach that upcoming semester. As the acting curriculum coordinator, the editors directed this inquiry to me and - excited for the chance to develop an assignment that would be classroom-tested during that upcoming semester - I immediately responded. Here was an opportunity to put work that I imagined to be largely hypothetical to test in a real classroom, one that I would have the opportunity to observe and be a part of. To some degree then, I anticipated that unknowability could play a different role in this example of curriculum development. Because I could see the efforts of my curriculum development labor put to work in a real classroom context, I could allow for student and instructor feedback (anecdotal and subjectively observed) to shape future development for classrooms of a similar type (upper-division courses in higher ed.). I anticipated that, instead, unknowability could play a larger role related to curriculum delivery and class facilitation. Meaning, because I was not serving as

instructor or even guest instructor - but rather as an infrequent classroom presence and embodied email address that students could contact if they chose to seek out additional support - I had relatively little control over how the assignment would be introduced, moderated, and evaluated. Not having the opportunity to know the intimate ways in which students interacted with the assignment (which the course instructor might also choose to be ignorant of), and knowing I would not request this kind of access or authority, restricted how I could know what students required, asked for, and responded to.

### *Developing the Infographic Assignment*

From DeVasto's first email, I learned a few details about the course and assignment goals: the course is an upper-division course in Information Design for the Department of English and the assignment would ask students to create a static, informative infographic with data from *EMKE*. It might be possible, the instructor suggested, to then share the submitted infographic assignments via *EMKE*'s social media platforms. In that same email, the instructor explained that she reached out to *EMKE* so that one of her course's assignments could be rooted in a "real" context. I didn't pursue clarification immediately and instead assumed that this was a pedagogical move to foster student interest and buy-in. My interpretation of the instructor's comment was that if students had a personal touchstone or frame of reference for the data they were asked to transform into an infographic, then perhaps they would both enjoy the process more and produce higher-quality submissions. This is a pedagogical move that informed my rationale for bringing a local focus to both course content and assignments (see the chapter three in this dissertation). Raising the stakes by asking that the infographics could be shared to a wide audience using *EMKE*'s social media presence, students would then have a specific audience in

mind, which could also positively impact both their experience creating the infographics as well as the seriousness with which they would approach the assignment, as a whole.

Through a quick succession of emails, DeVasto and I arranged to meet the next week. Recognizing my own limitations given the brief assignment description provided - namely, the need to identify and utilize specific data sets which could then be transformed into engaging data visualizations - I suggested that we include several others on *EMKE*'s staff as well as data experts on UWM's campus. In the weeks that followed, a group of no less than six on-campus experts met and worked together in various permutations to strategize and develop the infographic assignment. While the final assignment and subsequent assessment were ultimately the responsibility of and in the hands of the instructor, my insight and suggestions, especially regarding the need to collaborate and bring in on-campus experts from the *EMKE* project and the library, were incorporated into the final assignment design.

In those preparatory meetings, I learned more about the course itself and how the infographic assignment fit within the course - both in terms of timing as well as teaching and learning goals set out in the course syllabus. From that syllabus, I acquired rudimentary knowledge about information design, an academic topic and practice I previously knew little about. Treating the syllabus reading as an extremely limited crash-course, I learned this information design drew from rhetorical analysis, urged critical analysis, and called practitioners to consider audience and modes of delivery, all while producing documents meant to convey information. This course, in particular, would also introduce students to tools central to this kind of information dissemination work. While I found the course to be generally foreign territory at the outset, coming to an understanding that the course (and discipline/practice from which it

comes), I quickly felt comfortable with what the course was offering to students: introducing or reinforcing critical analysis skills and producing information meant to target a specific audience.

Termed ‘A2,’ the infographic assignment was one of three major assignments for the course and would be worth 15% of the final course grade. However, the assignments ‘A1’ through ‘A3’ were not given equal weight within the course’s evaluation scheme. As it was the first major assignment for the course, ‘A1’ (called ‘Document Analysis’) was worth 10% and as the culminating major assignment (‘A3’ was titled ‘Final Informative Package’) was worth 40% of the final course grade, respectively. Doing simple math, I found that these three assignments made up the greater part of the course grade (65%). This indicated to me that the instructor was emphasizing that students would be using theory, ideas, and principles from information design presented during class meetings or in the assigned course texts to *produce* information documents using different modes of communication (print or digital, for example). This emphasis on production (as opposed to asking students to regurgitate facts or theories about information design in the form of papers or presentations) struck me as the instructor providing significant opportunities for the students to position themselves as practitioners within or of this particular discipline.

The instructor scheduled assignments ‘A1’ through ‘A3’ so that the class period in which she introduced a new assignment would immediately follow the due date for the prior assignment. According to the calendar set out in the assignment sheet, A2 would span about four weeks of the academic semester and one class meeting per week (which lasts 75 minutes), on average, would be devoted to introducing, preparing for, and workshopping the assignment. The A2 assignment sheet explained that the students were asked to, “...develop a static infographic that visually interprets quantitative and/or qualitative data related to the greater Milwaukee area.”

Further language informed students that their audience is the “digital audience of the *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*” and that their work would be supported by *EMKE* staff and specialists in the UWM library. On the relatively sparse assignment sheet, the instructor listed a number of bullet points under the heading “Some Evaluation Criteria.” Amending the Grading Criteria found in the course syllabus, this list succinctly offered what elements students should include or consider (and should expect to be graded on) when creating their infographics. Many of the points, I felt, I was ill-equipped to address, as my research and training do not include rhetorical composition or information design. Several of these points stood out to me, however, as I thought my own experience as a historian and practiced curriculum developer (in my own classroom) might position me as someone who could communicate both why and how to respond to such evaluation criteria. These notable points informed students that they would be evaluated on whether their infographic, “[has] a compelling story supported by data,” and “represents data (from reliable sources) accurately.” As I interacted with students during three separate class meetings, I kept these points in mind. In closing both the first and second class meetings I attended, I communicated to students that, as a historian practiced in using data to create a narrative that chronicles change and continuity over time, I could assist them with this aspect of the infographic assignment. In the class session where I met with students in small groups to hear about their assignments-in-progress, I was mindful about asking them questions related to how they would transform data into a cohesive narrative.

Identifying relevant data sources and strategically gathering data from said sources are practices often central to the work historians do. This, however, was not asked of the students in this classroom. In the infographic assignment, students are not asked to do significant primary or secondary source research - their main focus is on *transformation* of information. Therefore, my

efforts, I concluded, needed to support the work students did transforming the data: guiding students through the process of transforming data they have been strategically led to into cohesive narratives that are meant to communicate that data via a public-facing product.

Collaborating with data and information experts from UWM's library meant that much of the work of identifying data sources, even data sets, was done for the students.<sup>260</sup> In the strategizing meetings, the group of us collaborating on assignment design and support labored over the decision of whether and how to focus the students' use of *EMKE*. Identifying a single topic or theme could restrict student research and creativity; however, such a decision would allow the instructor and collaborating support staff to direct their time and energy to collecting resources to share with students, which they would then transform. Ultimately, we decided to model our own use of *EMKE* entries during in-class visits and data-finding demonstrations on the topic of food and food production.

In the third and final class visit I made (along with fellow *EMKE* staff members Joe Walzer and Amy Fels), we offered feedback on the students' infographics-in-progress. The class split into two small groups of about seven students each and, including the instructor, two of us "authorities" heard a brief report from each of the students. Here, we found that students were drawing from a wide array of *EMKE* entries, sometimes veering from the topics of food and food production, to account for both their own interests and the data sources they were (or were not) able to find. I heard proposals that addressed how many cream puffs are eaten at the Wisconsin

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260. The product of many librarian-class collaborations at UWM, students had access to a so-called 'Course Guide,' a class-specific web page that points students to data sources and practices relevant to their class topic or assignment. This guide was created by Kristin Briney, UWM's Data Services Librarian: <https://guides.library.uwm.edu/eng439>. Generally, these course guides point students to relevant data sources and provide resources about appropriate ways to use and cite information.

State Fair every year, the recent rise of tourism in Milwaukee, the impact of the Hmong population in Milwaukee, and the history of Milwaukee's flour industry. Responding in turn to each of the students and their proposals, their instructor and I helped them continue their brainstorming process, suggesting where they might find alternate sources of data and how they might design a compelling format to transform and introduce that data. In her comments, DeVasto emphasized how students were following the conventions of the infographic genre and I found myself pushing the students to consider historical context as they constructed their narratives-through-image.

### *Infographic Assignment Outcomes*

During the brief time I was able to engage with students, we focused on identifying and accessing data sources and refining narrative approaches so that data could be transformed into a cohesive and intelligible infographic. Leading up to the assignment due date, I coordinated with DeVasto and the *EMKE* editorial team to draft a permission form to formalize the process of students sharing their work with *EMKE* via our social media outlets (at the time of writing this, *EMKE* has active Facebook and Twitter accounts). This form asked them for explicit permission to share their work via these outlets, whether or not they wanted to be identified as the author of the infographic, and, if so, how they wanted to be identified or tagged. Additionally, the form asked students to identify *EMKE* entries that they drew from and to share any feedback they had on collaborating with *EMKE* staff and using *EMKE* resources while completing the infographic assignment.

To date, just five students have elected to share their completed infographics with *EMKE*. In email correspondence with DeVasto, she shared that this surprised her and noted that she facilitated a conversation with her class to ask about their reluctance to share their infographics.

DeVasto reported that students did not feel confident in their final products - whether this means in terms of design or in the ways in which they did (or did not) draw from *EMKE* entries and resources, I do not know. In any event, this perceived (even explicated) fear is important to note. As I'll discuss more comprehensively in the conclusion to this dissertation, creating knowledge products in an unfamiliar or innovative mode and sharing the resulting creation with a wide and mostly unknown audience is understandably fear-inducing. It takes courage to feel confident in one's ability to share a first attempt at creating in a new mode - to claim authority on a topic in such a public way. Indeed, the ability to feel or enact courage is greatly shaped by one's positionality, identities, and relative privilege within a given context. The stakes don't often feel low or even achievable within academia. As I write this, I continue work with *EMKE* staff members to review, request revisions in, and ultimately share these five submissions. This is work done in collaboration, as no one on the team has experience sharing student work in this way.

Reflecting on my involvement developing this assignment and supporting its roll-out and reception, what emerges is central as the role that collaboration plays. From the instructor reaching out the *EMKE* staff for general support to strategizing with an on-campus group of librarians and historians - all committed to supporting teaching and learning efforts - each step in the process of making this assignment intelligible to, accessible for, and achievable by students has called for collaboration. In this case, the fruits of collaboration are positioning students of practitioners. Because of the intense and scaffolded support they received, some choose to take an opportunity to share their infographics with a public audience, identifying themselves as synthesizers and creators of knowledge.



My independently-developed Experiments in Education, such as those on Holy Hill and Increase Lapham, do not have the luxury of being classroom-tested. Identifying and addressing the unknowable and unknowability in these examples differs from how I was able to address both elements through collaboration as I supported the infographic assignment. The real-time creation and collaboration I had access to (and facilitated) in this case offers an invaluable case study for curriculum and assignment design. Here, student needs, identities, and interests could be taken into account: on more than one occasion, the instructor chose to move a due date or provide an additional measure of support (for instance, the third class visit I made) so that student success was always prioritized. In the conclusion that follows, I'll continue this discussion, adding remarks regarding my treatment of unknowability and the unknowable, exploring their role and impact in this public history project.

## **Conclusions**

In the introduction to this chapter, I suggested that the only point that could be assured or taken for granted in curriculum development for a public history project like *EMKE* is that encountering the unknowable or unknowability is inevitable. Unknowability traverses scale, I remarked; unknowable elements could include details about why readers were navigating to the *EMKE* digital platform in the first place and if they were interested in expanding their knowledge of the people, places, and topics addressed in *EMKE* entries. Though a comment function is available through the *EMKE* website, and readers are encouraged to leave comments on individual entries, the feature is generally under-used. Therefore, how readers are reacting to the information as presented in the entries - how it sparks their curiosity, sends them down a research rabbit hole after they click on a link in the footnotes to investigate further, or inspires a phone

call to a friend or family member in order to reminisce about a visit to the Wisconsin State Fair, is largely unknown.

I attempted to answer *why* one should be responsive to the unknowable and unknowability earlier in this chapter. To do so, I discussed how both are addressed in examples of queer pedagogy. Queer approaches to pedagogy build from the premise that identities are social constructions and add that identities are also fractured, intersecting, and multiple. To attend to this point, teachers and learners must first acknowledge this certainty (like the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle dictates, perhaps we cannot know both what identities students inhabit and how they are at work in a given moment). Only then can their curriculum development manifest the understanding that the unknowable exists. Attending to the unknowable calls for flexibility, and several scholars cited above echo this point. However, aside from my remarks on my collaboration with instructor Dani DeVasto as a case study of exploring unknowability, I can offer no definitive roadmap here about how this flexibility might play out. The dimensions of flexibility must be worked out in individual sites: in classrooms, encounters between student and teacher, and lesson planning, and must happen in real time. More than a distinct method with a concrete approach, creating and maintaining flexibility is a particular mindset or disciplinary habit of mind that must be developed over time. Clearly, more work is required to theorize the role and function of flexibility within higher education. Especially necessary is scholarship that provides case studies and real examples of how teachers and learners have succeeded (and failed) at creating and maintaining flexibility in the classroom.

In this chapter, I also suggest *how* we can address the unknowable and unknowability in other ways besides including flexibility in our pedagogy toolkit. As Curriculum Coordinator with *EMKE*, I was tasked with finding out more about how instructors at UWM already did or might

want to engage or with *EMKE* entries and resources, as the editorial team had no knowledge of this. I began my tenure by talking with other teachers and learners. Each conversation shaped my approach to curriculum development and helped me to work through the possibilities for addressing the unknowable aspects of my project.

For example, my conversation with English 102 instructor Joni Hayward helped me to understand that that which is unknowable does not stand in direct opposition to that which is knowable. These terms and ideas are not oppositional, necessarily, and may not even be mutually exclusive. Instead, it might be best to conceive of the relationship between knowable and unknowable using a different scheme: perhaps as a foil, where what is knowable can root us in a path of inquiry and aid in discerning the questions and resources we must look to, given our base knowledge of a topic or idea. Another way to imagine the relationship between that which is known and unknown is by mapping them onto a spectrum, that endlessly useful tool that aids in our understanding of everything from the colors of light visible to the human eye to gender identity.

My conversation with Rachel Buff helped me to see how I could build from the premise that the *EMKE* itself cannot claim to “know” everything about Milwaukee and the metropolitan area. As I asked her about taking into account students’ identities, needs, and skills as she designed classroom curricula, we began talking about to what extent students, especially first-year or introductory-level students, are able to successfully complete elements of coursework that ask them to consider identity (including their own) through the lens of critical analysis. This led to a productive discussion about the possibilities of troubling *EMKE*, using it not simply as a repository of information that students could use as they began to learn more about gender, race, ethnicity, and their place in Milwaukee, turning to entries about notable locals like “Vel

Phillips,”<sup>261</sup> or even “Peoples,”<sup>262</sup> which takes a far more broad and theoretical stance. Rather, *EMKE* could serve as a site where curricula guides students through source-critical exercises, in which they would first take stock of the voices and identities that are present.<sup>263</sup> With this knowledge in hand, they could begin to question what forces (institutional, academic, or otherwise) inform how certain people or topics are present and others are not. Pursuing this line of inquiry asks students to explore what is missing, who is missing, what gaps and silences exists, or what types of source material are either relied upon or perhaps are entirely absent from consideration.

Each conversation and the insights therein helped to mitigate the fact that the specific classroom audiences, the identities they occupy, the needs they require, and the skills and knowledge they possess remain unknowable. Creating curricula without the ability to classroom-test (for the most part) is a new, distinct challenge. So much of the work I do designing and rolling out curricula depends on student feedback - and even real time feedback that I now

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261. Genevieve G. McBride, “Vel Phillips,” in *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, edited by Amanda Seligman and Margo Anderson (Encyclopedia of Milwaukee, 2016), <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/vel-phillips>.

262. Margo Anderson, “Peoples,” in *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, edited by Amanda Seligman and Margo Anderson (Encyclopedia of Milwaukee, 2016), <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/peoples>.

263. Source-critical work like this is often difficult to both conceive of as well as implement within a classroom setting, as this work is far more process-driven than it is content-driven. The process asks students and learners alike to browse, to ruminate, and to remain flexible - practices encouraged for professional academics, but often made inaccessible or even invisible to our students. “We only have fifteen weeks,” some may argue. To this point I would argue that if our goal (or responsibility, even) is to create a democratic public then we must do all we can to prepare our students to be in the public sphere. Memorizing names and dates and locations (while interesting and sometimes useful!) is not the best use of our time. The resources I developed or co-developed in this chapter respond to both the points I raise: that time-management is difficult (and so having already-developed curricula is important), and that we must use our valuable classroom time to prepare students to engage in a wider world, equipped with the skills of information (and historical) literacy.

understand I often have the luxury to respond to. Until I was designing for an audience of unknown teachers and learners, it was not apparent to me how much I rely on being able to react in real time to the needs, skills, and even desires of students with whom I have one-on-one interactions.

My conversations with instructors helped increase my knowledge about possible ways instructors might use *EMKE* in the classroom, but also helped me accept that most responses to curricula I created would remain unknown, in contrast to classroom teaching. I decided to build on what I *did* know, and designed the Experiments in Education based on my own classroom experience and SoTL scholarship. HistorySoTL scholarship argues that certain concepts and competencies are common to all good history pedagogy, whether this is in the classroom or not, and these guide the materials I created. The Experiments in Education are also meant to be replicable, so other instructors can design their own, which if they follow my model, will incorporate SoTL principles.

The curriculum development examples I provide in this chapter model how to incorporate objects and object-based learning in the history classroom in higher education. I offer explicit direction for this mode of pedagogy in the teaching and learning video resources associated with the Experiment in Education examples I offer. The Infographic Assignment in ENG 439 invites prospective students to consider material objects, provides them with tools and resources for engagement with specific objects, and calls them to draw upon their memories of material engagement.<sup>264</sup> What food production-related items and in what context students have encountered these objects is mostly unknowable. However, we can be sure that students have

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264. Further work investigating memory and material culture, and perhaps how this intersection could be drawn upon for curriculum development in pedagogy and/or SoTL literature, is necessary.

encountered food waste, milled flour, and perhaps even cream puffs (a Wisconsin State Fair specialty) during their lifetime. The assignments for Holy Hill and Increase Lapham ask students to consider how material engagement with an object might uphold, challenge, or widen their perspective on a topic. The Infographic Assignment ultimately drew from memories of engagement, an element I did not detect until I had time to provide feedback on the students' projects-in-progress and then later reflect on what seemingly motivated their topic choices. It was something I did not know would happen, a perfect example of the unknowability of teaching and learning.

Perhaps the memory of finding a patch of shade on a hot day in early-August in which to enjoy a cream puff on the Wisconsin State Fair Grounds might just have spurred a student in the class to investigate the production and consumption of said cream puffs.<sup>265</sup> Banking on the idea that others within the readership of the digital *EMKE* or subscribers of *EMKE*'s social media accounts might have enjoyed a similar moment, a student in ENG 439 chose cream puffs as their infographic topic. And perhaps a similar memory of the cool whipped cream filling challenging a hot summer's day would encourage a follower of *EMKE*'s twitter account, to which the infographic would be posted, to read more about cream puffs. Starting from the infographic and moving to any number of linked *EMKE* entries, and venturing on to outside sources, they might continue their investigation: finding that cream puff production has both changed and remained constant since 1924 (the first year cream puffs were sold),<sup>266</sup> that patterns of gendered labor exist

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265. Wisconsin's first State Fair was hosted in Janesville in 1851. Until the West Allis Fairgrounds (the current location) opened in 1892, the State Fair rotated through several locations in Milwaukee, Madison, and Janesville, often scheduled for late September into early October. Since 1920, the State Fair has been held with dates falling sometime in August, Jerry Zimmerman, *150 Years of the Wisconsin State Fair: An Illustrated History, 1851-2001* (Milwaukee/West Allis, Wisconsin, Wisconsin State Fair Park, 2001).

266. Matthew Costello, "Wisconsin State Fair" in *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, edited by

in the dairy industry,<sup>267</sup> or that the Wisconsin Baker's Association - the organization that introduced and continues to supply fairgoers with upwards of 400,000 cream puffs every year - is a group with active membership that provides resources, training, and even scholarships for local bakers and bakeries.<sup>268</sup> This is just a hypothesis, imagining how building from a memory and proceeding on curiosity could bring a user to engage with *EMKE* content.

Food and food production is something students have encountered, and likely have memories of, within a local context, which made it a good choice for the local focus that instructor Dani DeVasto wanted as an important element of the Infographic Assignment, in her effort to make the assignment more “real.” Allowing these encounters to shape the direction of research, and thus the topic of the infographic, gave students an opportunity to utilize or draw from these memories of material encounter. During the assignment introduction, DeVasto directed students that infographics, which wield images as powerful tools, can tell stories, evoke emotions, and persuade viewers to believe something or take action.<sup>269</sup>

I did my best to anticipate limitations as I developed curricula and teaching and learning resources and I created the videos so that (a simulacrum of) material engagement could be made

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Amanda Seligman and Margo Anderson (Encyclopedia of Milwaukee, 2016), <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/wisconsin-state-fair/>.

267. In the same year that cream puffs debuted at the Wisconsin State Fair, the Women's Department began their “Milk Campaign,” to emphasize the nutritional value of whole milk, Zimmerman, *150 Years*, 26. In the present day, the Milwaukee Bucks sponsor the Milk House which offers several varieties of flavored milk (including sea salt caramel and root beer) for just fifty cents a cup, “Milwaukee Bucks Milk House,” Wisconsin State Fair, accessed March 15, 2019, <https://wistatefair.com/fair/milwaukee-bucks-milk-house/>.

268. “We Are WBA,” Wisconsin Bakers Association, accessed March 14, 2019, <https://wibakers.com/resources-wba>.

269. Along with lectures from their instructor, students in ENG 439 were assigned a course text that provided context and resources for infographic creation: Randy Krum, *Cool Infographics: Effective Communication with Data Visualization and Design* (John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2013), ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uwm/detail.action?docID=1566515>.

accessible to a wide range of teachers and learners.<sup>270</sup> I took care to consider that arranging opportunities for material engagement might be difficult depending on student and teacher location, ability, time, or mode of course delivery. Anticipating that it would not be feasible, impossible even, for a History 150: Multicultural America instructor to arrange for the thirty students enrolled in the course to visit Holy Hill, roughly thirty miles from UWM's campus and inaccessible by public transportation, I created a video that explores space and the experience of space. Because it could prove difficult for instructor and students alike to arrange for each of the fifteen students enrolled in HIST 192: Topics in History to have dedicated time investigating Increase Lapham's shaving kit in the Archives at UWM's Golda Meir Library, I created another video that shows my own experience materially engaging with this object. Calling exclusively for material engagement with the object would mean that the Experiment in Education could only be utilized by on-campus, face-to-face courses or people physically proximal to UWM with the means to travel there. Providing a video to capture some elements of material engagement (including sound) with the shaving kit helps the object, and interaction with it, become accessible to a far wider population of teachers and learners. The shaving kit is incredibly fragile; perhaps good stewardship of the object, in part, means that engagement with it happens in this mediated way so that the object maintains its material integrity. In an auxiliary resource that addresses "how I did this" and provides further resources for others interested in creating similar video resources, I suggest that the fragility of the shaving kit encouraged both how and why I recorded my exploration. Reflecting on my decision, I encourage other potential video and resource-

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270. Notably, any image, map, or video made available through the *EMKE* digital platform is a digital representation of the thing itself. Many material culture theorists advocate for engaging with the material thing, itself, as the sensory experience of engaging with an object cannot be replicated in an image or video. This point could benefit from further theorizing, considering the benefits of mediated object encounters as opposed to no object encounter at all.



makers to consider similar limitations or possibilities, given the physical state of the source material/s they consider.

Whether or not other teachers and learners consult the videos and Engagements in Education, find them useful, or seek to use them as a model for their own video or resource creation is again, unknowable. I cannot know how people will use these resources or even if they are used within the context of *EMKE*. Should the *EMKE* editorial team be successful in their grant writing projects, then I suggest that the Curriculum Consultant work to build relationships with teachers and learners in the community and, building from *EMKE*'s social media presence, far outside the bounds of Milwaukee and its metropolitan area.

As I discuss in chapter three and chapter four, my experiences in object-based teaching and learning initiatives indicates that the success of these projects depends on contributions from willing collaborators. This is even more true for the materials I created for *EMKE*, an any class session, assignment, or project that seeks to incorporate *EMKE* . Even if an instructor elects to use an Experiment in Education already available on the *EMKE* digital platform rather than create her own, this is a kind of collaboration, as the instructor is building from the instructions and information provided by the curriculum developer/s.

The platform of a large-scale public history program allows me to provide materials for teaching and learning through and with material culture for a much larger audience than just my own classroom. This makes assessing the outcomes as I've done in other chapters very difficult.<sup>271</sup> Instead, what I can offer is the insight that in addition to remaining flexible, engaging

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271. Here is an excellent path for future research and writing I would be eager to take up, should grant-writing initiatives be successful and align with my own availability to take up such a position, if offered.

in collaboration is key. Collaboration mitigates the impact of the unknowable, including any emerging feelings of fear, in teaching and learning.

## Chapter 6 Conclusion

In the preceding chapters, I have worked to continue the nascent discussion of why and how to incorporate material culture in the humanities classroom in higher education. Primarily, this conversation stems from the emergence of the material turn in the discipline of history, and in the humanities, more generally. It also responds to calls that students in higher education must acquire the tools, habits, and modes of thinking particular to practitioners within their discipline, be it history, women's and gender studies, or some other discipline within the humanities. My contribution to this discussion sits at the intersection of material culture theory, feminist pedagogy, and the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), and is a work of feminist praxis.

I centralize my own teaching practice and draw extensively from my experiences developing curricula and facilitating spaces of teaching and learning. Knowing that the full breadth of the human experience cannot be understood from consulting written texts alone, I was pushed from relying solely on the written record to fill my syllabi. Like many historians, archaeologists, and anthropologists before me, I turned to material culture to address the gaps and silences. Turning to objects, I contend, allows for teachers and learners to represent, highlight, and interrogate a broad range of identities. When rooted in material culture theory, it offers disciplines in the humanities novel epistemological routes for exploring knowledge and meaning-making.

My own development of object-centered teaching and learning practices builds from a extant pedagogical form: the object lesson. I have made liberal use of the term and idea throughout this dissertation, as have other education researchers and pedagogues before me. By bringing practices of engaged pedagogy - that which seeks to create and maintain well-being within the classroom - to bear on theorizing about and then practicing object-centered teaching

and learning myself, I have made this a distinctively feminist endeavor. Throughout, I have been careful to address both *why* others should engage in similar teaching and learning practices and, by modeling my own practice and extensively creating and sharing resources, *how* they could undertake such a pedagogical shift, themselves. As I reflected on my time spent developing curricula and teaching, I expanded theoretical discussions on authority, identity, and unknowability and how they can manifest in spaces of teaching and learning. In this conclusion, I will offer a some final remarks on authority, identity, and unknowability, and begin to explore the impact they can have on efforts to create and maintain well-being.

### **Authority, Identity, Unknowability, and Well-Being**

My discussion of engaged pedagogy in the introduction to this dissertation summarized hooks' conception of the practice, emphasizing its connection to creating and maintaining well-being in spaces of teaching and learning. hooks urges pedagogues to ensure well-being: of teachers, learners, students, and all the roles that shift and mutate within the confines of a classroom. Well-being is essential to engaged pedagogy, truly the element that separates it from any other approach to teaching and learning, feminist or otherwise. In part, I see that my work here is to explore, critique, and expand how teachers and learners can practice engaged pedagogy and point to exciting new possibilities. My central contribution to this initiative is to discuss and model why and how engaging with objects - stuff, things, material culture - continues the work of developing an engaged pedagogy. Authority, identity, and unknowability have each figured prominently as I discuss courses I have developed and taught, and activities I have proposed to accompany a public history resource. While focusing on a single sub-theme seemed to be the best way to frame theoretical discussions and organize my reflections in each of the individual body chapters (chapters three through five), in actuality, authority, unknowability, and identity

intersected and permuted in countless figurations across my teaching experiences and in the chapters here. That these themes would shift and slip and modulate has been one of the few certainties I encountered as I researched, taught, wrote, and created.

For example, though authority and how it is understood through the lens of feminism and feminist theory is a theme I present in Chapter Three, *The Supper Club: Objects in a Women's History Classroom*, it emerged in significant ways in Chapter Five, *Experiments in Education: Objects and Public History*. In that context, I reflect on the special efforts I took to cite as many *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee (EMKE)* entries as possible, including entries I wrote as well as those written by others.<sup>272</sup> This dissertation is a platform and I have the opportunity to elevate or emphasize the work of my colleagues; I have done so here. However, my choice is not some kind of veiled nepotism, but is rather an effort to highlight work I am familiar with and, through my citation practices, challenge traditional views of who or what is an authority or is authoritative, and therefore "cite-able." Many *EMKE* entry writers do not have advanced academic credentials that might position them as traditional "authorities" on a given subject; they may not occupy the identity "historian of" a specialized topic, event, or person that is addressed in an entry. This point does not make the history that *EMKE* presents to the public any less valid or authoritative, however. Because it "aims to provide comprehensive coverage of the history of Milwaukee,"<sup>273</sup> a significant amount of work undertaken by the *EMKE* editorial team and writers was to research and create narratives that were formally unwritten and, often times, built from

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272. During my tenure as a writer for *EMKE*, I authored the following entries: "Gender;" "Holy Hill;" "Inner Core;" "Wayne, Town of;" "Trenton, Town of;" "Polk, Town of;" "Newburg;" "Kewaskum, Town of;" "Jackson, Village of;" "Farmington, Town of;" "Erin, Town of;" "Addison, Town of;" and "Washington County."

273. "About," *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, accessed May 11, 2019, <https://emke.uwm.edu/about/>.

just traces in the archival record. Therefore, in many cases the person writing the entry *is* the authority on the subject of that entry.

It is this very reason, as reported to me, that librarians Kristin Woodward and Nicole Bungert turned to the *EMKE* as they designed a portion of the new ENG 102 curriculum.<sup>274</sup> Early on in my discussion with them, Bungert explained that because the curriculum designers were trying to make ENG 102 more local and more tied to a specific, local communities, they wanted most of what students would be working with in terms of sources to be related to Milwaukee. Furthermore, they sought out sources written by people who would *not* be considered “scholars” or “experts.” In part, this decision was to emphasize to students, who would later create their own “knowledge product,” that even if you don’t hold a PhD or advanced credentials, you can still be an expert on something, bringing a different kind of expertise or perspective to an issue or topic. Without naming it as such, Woodward and Bungert’s decisions regarding the kind of source material to turn to asked students to engage in disciplinary ways of thinking and helped position students as practitioners of history. They presented students with examples of “expert-level” knowledge production, asked them to critically engage with both the content and process of knowledge production (through the “Taxonomy” exercise), and effectively provided a bridge for students so that, they too, could present their own work as expert-level scholarship.

This is an example of fostering opportunities for well-being in higher education. Positioning--and, perhaps more importantly, allowing students to position *themselves*--as experts or “authorities” on some place, actor, or idea creates opportunities for expression, empowerment,

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274. For a discussion of this project, see the section titled “Designing Assignments for a Public History Project” in Chapter 5.

liberation, and risk-taking. In citing my colleagues, drawing from their narratives to tell my own, I endorse them and lend them authority. Similarly, the students who created *The Supper Club* each positioned themselves as historian, authority, and artist as they wrote narratives, embroidered, glued, painted, spoke, and finally co-created the artists' statement for the end-of-semester gallery show.<sup>275</sup> Here, the students developed a sense of well-being by both claiming for themselves and *sharing* authority. This observation offers an opportunity to explore the impact of engaged pedagogy, noting that efforts to create and maintain well-being for teachers and learners within the classroom can have impacts beyond it. In *Creating The Supper Club*,<sup>276</sup> one student explains that she chose her aunt as her subject, someone for whom there was no traditional record, despite the significant contributions she had made to her community and beyond. Sharing authority also meant that students turned to personal and local resources as they researched their subject or learned crafting techniques particular to that woman's life, location, and identities. As I remark in the close of the teaching and learning video resource, the exchange between domestic and academic space authorized the means of knowledge production in one context within the space of the other. Students discussed the academic research project over dinner tables, asking those seated with them about their experiences and knowledge of a specific place or time. In the classroom, students shared knowledge of an embroidery technique, taught to them by a long-passed grandparent. Because many students who attend UWM are first-generation college students,<sup>277</sup> this exchange and the sharing of authority it demands can positively impact, and perhaps contribute to, the well-being of those outside our classroom space.

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275. See Appendix F for the Artists' Statement associated with *The Supper Club*.

276. See Appendix G.

277. "U1.0 FAQs," Inclusive Excellence Center, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, accessed May 8, 2019, <https://uwm.edu/inclusiveexcellence/u-1-0-faqs/>.

Next, insight from teacher-scholars like Susan Iverson and Kevin Kumashiro encourage us, in the face of the unknowable and unknowability, to be flexible with our teaching, to prepare to be unprepared. I explored “the unknowable” and “unknowability” at length in Chapter Five, *Experiments in Education: Objects and Public History*. In a much wider scope, those ideas, especially the flexibility that is called for in the wake of unknowability, pertains to any mention of teaching and learning in higher education I make in this dissertation.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>278</sup>. In the present day, terms like “flexibility” have taken on new meaning; this is certainly the case in a post-Act 10 Wisconsin and in a nation where higher education is increasingly vilified. Administrators may innocuously ask for “flexibility” from faculty and academic teaching staff as budgets get tighter or class enrollments drop, though many times what they are really doing is coercing faculty and staff to do more work with less time and fewer resources because of increasing neoliberal and capitalist pressure. In this context, calls for “flexibility” are really demands for acceptance of precarity within higher education. In my endorsement of greater flexibility in teaching and learning, I want to be clear that I am not advocating that by remaining flexible or by prioritizing flexibility, teachers and learners should also open themselves up to exploitation by the institution. Still, this is a significant risk and reality. Frustratingly, I see that “exploitation” is insidious and hard to nail down. It could be spending extra time and emotional labor on a colleague who needs an extra-long lunch break to console them as they share with you that they don’t know how they will be able to continue their education because they were not awarded funding. It may also be taking on multiple independent study students in a single semester (a teaching appointment that goes without pay at UWM) because you know a student could not complete their research project, and then have a chance of getting a good graduate school offer, without it. At the extreme, it is worrying about or suffering at the hand of the increased adjunct-ification of higher education - not knowing if the years and hours spent earning an advanced, specialized degree will assure you of any job prospects or stability. 2011 Wisconsin Act 10, or the “Wisconsin Budget Repair Bill” was proposed and then signed into law by Republican then-Governor Scott Walker. Act 10 is a piece of legislation that all but eviscerated the University of Wisconsin System; nearly a decade after it was signed into law, administrators, staff, faculty, and students are still grappling with the fallout, see Dave Umhoefer and Sarah Hauer, “From Teacher ‘Free Agency’ to Merit Pay, the Uproar Over Act 10 Turns into Upheaval in Wisconsin Schools, October 9, 2016, *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, <https://projects.jsonline.com/news/2016/10/9/from-teacher-free-agency-to-merit-pay-the-uproar-over-act-10.html>. See Thomas H. Benton, “Why Do They Hate Us?,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 26, 2010, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Why-Do-They-Hate-Us-/124608>; Scott Dalrymple, “The Question of Deplorable Snowflakes,” *Inside Higher Ed*, September 11, 2018, [المنارة للاستشارات](https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2018/09/11/bridging-gap-between-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)



In another iteration, unknowability and identity intersected when students in WGS 201: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies explored the chapter titled "Privilege and Oppression" in the course text *Threshold Concepts in Women's and Gender Studies*.<sup>279</sup> Introduction to WGS students often have a difficult time grappling with how the text calls them to recognize the ways in which their own experience of privilege has directly led to another person's experience of oppression.<sup>280</sup> Additionally, the categories of identity that many students occupy, and – in turn – expect others to occupy, can prohibit their understanding of others, effectively erasing another's identity.

In the Engagement Activity that asks students to explore photographer Lois Bielefeld's work *Androgyny*, students begin to work through the connections between privilege and oppression as well as identity and unknowability.<sup>281</sup> Bielefeld's series of photographs that make up part of the larger work *Androgyny* feature subjects whose gender identity is not apparent from a visual reading (and as Introduction to WGS students learn in my course, gender identity should *never* be assumed from a visual reading). In part, *Androgyny* asks viewers to reflect on the usual immediate impulse many of us have to name and categorize, often relying on visual markers alone. On a deeper level, the work challenges viewers' tendency to (wrongfully) conflate gender identity with other categories of identity like gender expression and sexual orientation. By completing this activity, students begin to understand the limits of knowability and begin to see

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anti-intellectualism-and-higher-education-opinion; Adam Harris, "The Death of an Adjunct," April 8, 2019, *The Atlantic*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2019/04/adjunct-professors-higher-education-thea-hunter/586168/>.

279. See Holly Hassel and Christine Launius, *Threshold Concepts in Women's and Gender Studies: Ways of Seeing, Thinking, and Knowing* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

280. The writers of the textbook anticipate this learning bottleneck and in a repeated section they call "Learning Roadblocks," they identify why people might have difficulty grasping the concept, Hassel and Launius, *Threshold Concepts*, 77-78.

281. See Appendix I.

how the identities they may occupy, and the social systems that dictate how those identities are scripted, contribute to knowability. Thus, there is the possibility that identity, as it is linked to specific experiences of privilege, limits knowability.

In a society that privileges cisgender, heterosexual-presenting individuals and whose institutions create and maintain social scripts to enforce and police these normative identities and how they manifest on the surface of our bodies (through clothing, for example), *Androgyny* calls viewers to confront the fact that, without explication, identities are unknowable. There are no “answers,” no secret messages written on the back of Bielefeld’s photographs that reveal a subject’s gender identity. There is no method of looking differently or looking better in order to glean the knowledge they may crave. The limits of knowability of another identity, then, can come from something other than privilege or ill will.<sup>282</sup> It is entirely possible that a member of an identity-based group could say that others could never know that aspect of their identity because to do so, they would need to have/be that identity and life experience. Therefore, identity does create limits to knowability, for which there is no way around. This, among other reasons, is why maintaining diversity, especially in terms of the source material students are asked to evaluate and interrogate in a course, is important. Creating and maintaining well-being is only truly possible in spaces of teaching and learning that teach to, with, and for a diverse identities.

Students’ time spent looking - and looking carefully - and then (likely) having their assumptions challenged pertaining to what they see, and what they initially think it *means*, helps students refine their skills of visual analysis as well as their practices of meaning-making. In

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282. In referencing ill will, I hypothesize that a person could refuse to interrogate that which was formerly “unknowable” and could be engaging in a defensive move, one that is meant to maintain the (unearned) privilege they experience; refusing or even being reluctant to interrogate the unknowable could mean that a person does so because they do not want to relinquish (unearned) privilege.

every Object Reflection, another assignment that Introduction to WGS students complete, they respond to a prompt titled “Investigating the Object.” This prompt asks them a series of questions about what they observe and eventually moves them toward prompts that ask them what they think these observations *mean* about objects under analysis. Here, then, is an example of how students develop disciplinary habits of mind, ones that are transferrable to other exercises that call them to engage critically and produce knowledge.

In addition to intersecting and colliding, shaping both real and hypothetical possibilities for creating and maintaining well-being in the higher education classroom, authority, identity, and unknowability all come to bear on my own experience of well-being in spaces of teaching and learning. To theorize further about these connections, I reflect on my own experiences. In doing this, I follow hooks’ call that, “it is often productive if professors take the first risk, linking confessional narratives to academic discussions so as to show how experience can illuminate and enhance our understanding of academic material.”<sup>283</sup> This approach also emphasizes the second-wave feminist maxim “the personal is political,” meaning, in part, that personal accounts can both illuminate and challenge the ways in which our society is built from and by systems of privilege and oppression.

bell hooks asserts that “progressive, holistic education, engaged pedagogy, is more demanding than conventional critical or feminist pedagogy. For, unlike these two teaching practices, it emphasizes well-being. Teaching and learning via engaged pedagogy means that teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization, a location that creates well-being and is necessary if they are to teach in a manner that recognizes, values, and

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283. hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 21.

empowers students.”<sup>284</sup> Positioning myself as an engaged pedagogue means that I must also grapple with self-actualization and reflect on the ways I have worked to align my mind, body, and spirit, essential for achieving self-actualization, according to hooks.<sup>285</sup> Though hooks speaks in vague terms about the sacred and the spiritual, I immediately turn to examples from organized religion, systems that can present models for doing this work. hooks explains that engaged pedagogy “comes easiest to those of us who teach who also believe that there is an aspect of our vocation that is sacred; who believe that our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students.”<sup>286</sup>

In a more difficult challenge, the aforementioned passage calls me to consider what is “sacred” and “spiritual,” two terms I have distanced myself from since my own journey in higher education began. Though I was raised in a Catholic household, I do not consider myself a religious person, although perhaps I could say that I draw from some religious practices to engage in a kind of spirituality. However, my years of socialization within a strict religious institution mean that, at the very least, I understand the language that describes the difference between “sacred” and “spiritual.” Most intensely, my family of origin and the Catholic, androcentric, and patriarchal values it often took as unchallenged, engrained in me motivations strongly tied to control, punishment, and deferring to or working to please authority. For me, self-actualization has meant identifying these forces and their impact on my consciousness,

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284. hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 15.

285. Though she does not provide a discrete definition or expanded discussion of what she means by “self-actualization,” I imagine that hooks is influenced by the feminist practice of “consciousness raising” as well her mentor Paulo Friere’s concept of *conscientização*, or critical consciousness, the practice of knowing your place in a world full of contradictions in order to upend systems that deny and oppress, see *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York, Bloomsbury: 2000).

286. hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 21.

actions, and conception of self. This process accelerated once I was charged with leading my own classroom (Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies), where I actively - and attempted to collectively - identify and root out that which motivates all members of a classroom to defer to authority and invite that presence to control and punish.

I am sure that the characteristics I describe contributed to my emerging anxiety disorder, though I cannot point to a specific moment or cause of its genesis. I did not have the resources or support to recognize it until much later, so many memories within academic contexts (and not just higher education) have been characterized by experiencing anxiety. For years, unaddressed anxiety severely limited my ability for self-actualization and well-being; there have been times that I have chosen *not* to pursue an opportunity that might later benefit me or my career because the context for that event contained too many anxiety triggers. Sometimes, experiencing anxiety meant that I had to leave class or an event early, or spend time in the hall or bathroom practicing conscious breathing in order to calm myself. Even these small instances became larger accretions over time, representing an ever-growing list of lost opportunities for learning and engagement.

However, in my very first semester as a dissertator and full-time instructor, I experienced a transformational moment that, still to this day, challenges how I understand myself and my well-being within academic spaces. During the filming of *Creating The Supper Club*, my colleague and the filmer/producer Allain Daigle and I reviewed classroom footage, putting together the first drafts of the teaching and learning video resource. As we sat in front of his computer, I became awestruck by my image and movements on the screen. I shared with Allain that a moment we had just reviewed on film was one that I remember experiencing acute anxiety in. In the moment represented on film, I stood in front of my class facilitating conversation and I remember that I was nearly consumed with thoughts that my anxiety would manifest in visible

and in ways understood as troublesome to my students. However, as I sat and reviewed the footage, and even with this recollection, *I could not detect or read that felt anxiety*. And in that out-of-body moment, I began to see myself in significantly different ways. In the footage, I read myself and my actions to be those of a person who possessed authority and appeared confident and assertive as they facilitated a dynamic and thoughtful classroom. In the semesters that followed, this moment of revelation became a touchstone and a helpful reminder in those moments of emerging anxiety that I did not have to so thoroughly concern myself with how I would be perceived by others. I could instead focus my attention on the task or moment at hand, eventually feeling the rising panic subside. I am a better, more present teacher without the constant awareness of my anxiety sapping the energy and attention I can give to students.

Knowing that I would never live an anxiety-free life, but one in which my anxiety is acknowledged and managed, over time I began to understand my experience of anxiety as *a tool* within spaces of teaching and learning. Anxiety causes me to be hyper-aware of the space I occupy and my relationship to it. I am still working to re-frame how I cope with this symptom in the moment, but I believe that how I experience anxiety does compel me to think more deeply about relationships and how they are facilitated, or perhaps hindered, by spaces and the built environment. The struggle I endured confronting my own mental illness helps me treat other teachers and learners with care and empathy. Meeting students (and people) where they are is intensive and necessary work. Often, this statement is understood as a mantra that describes responses to helping students who may not be prepared to engage with course content or meet indicated learning goals. Students, myself included, struggle to meet the demands of higher education for myriad reasons, and often because they are juggling responsibilities and identities

that aren't always recognized or deemed valid within academic spaces.<sup>287</sup> Therefore, creating the teaching and learning video resources unwittingly provided me with opportunities for necessary self-reflection, and I have come to both see myself and inhabit my body and role as teacher in different ways, ways in which I experience a greater sense of well-being, and perhaps even the beginnings of self-actualization.

Using my teaching and learning video resources as an example of *how* similar work could be taken up, this mode of teaching and learning tool creation could certainly be done by others, and could fulfill a variety of goals (as they have done for me). I produced the videos, in part, so that they could be accessible to people whose learning styles are more oriented toward the visual than reading text. By posting them on a public platform like YouTube, I expand their possible impact to an unknowable group of viewers. As I now understand that they helped me to effectively communicate my ideas and reflections about teaching and learning practices, I would recommend that other teachers with anxiety disorders might also benefit from creating such teaching and learning video resources. But, experiencing disability does not have to preclude creating in this manner. I also recommend that others, because I imagine that like me they could use it as a tool for reflection, could create such videos because they simply seek to improve their teaching practice.

### **A Final Charge**

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287. Though it is classified as an R1 Research University, this is especially apparent at UWM, as the University's "access" mission "provid[es] an affordable college education for first-generation college students, working and working-class students, minority students, returning veterans, and students with disabilities," see Merry Wiesner-Hanks, "History of Research at UWM," University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, accessed May 28, 2019, <https://uwm.edu/research-history/>.

Charting new epistemologies to direct teaching and learning and then putting curricula developed within those frames to work in the humanities classroom in higher education takes a leap. This is scary, precarious work in a context in which fear and precarity seem to have an increasing presence. I believe that, in part, this fear can be overcome (or at least mitigated) with a commitment to collaboration. The research, reflections, and resources I present in this dissertation could not have been completed without collaboration, and I fully advocate relying on collaboration to generate approaches to teaching and learning, ones that prioritize expression, empowerment, liberation, and risk-taking - all elements, hooks argues, that contribute to well-being<sup>288</sup>. Collaboration helps ease the burden of taking on something new, lending courage to explore the unknown. In collaborative contexts, authority is shared; radically sharing authority is a possibility when fear is overcome.

I urge you, dear readers, to counter fear, precarity, and leaps into the unknown with celebration. Hooks reminds us that “conditions of radical openness exist in any learning situation where students and teachers celebrate their abilities to think critically, to engage in pedagogical praxis.”<sup>289</sup> Though I did not anticipate that they would serve in this way, each of the teaching and learning video resources I created as part of this dissertation is a celebration for the very reason hooks suggests. The videos resonate and reach beyond the walls of the classroom in which they were created; they celebrate the potential of collaboration, a beautiful variety of student and learner identities, radical authority sharing, and student contributions to knowledge-making.

When I began writing this dissertation in earnest in 2016, I felt there were few reasons in my life worthy of celebration. Following that year’s election results, my choice to pursue a life as

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288. hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*.

289. hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 202.



a teacher and learner never felt more under attack. At the same time, it never felt more relevant. As I increasingly found myself in spaces where I was joined with those engaged in resisting, listening, learning, and engaging in activism, I felt rising feelings of guilt that I drew so much pleasure and satisfaction from being part of the communities that emerged. After long consideration, I began to come to terms with these feelings and to embrace my tendency to celebrate the community and the knowledge that grew out of protest. What better antidote to fear than celebration, I resolved. As I do now myself, I leave you with a final charge: in your own practices of teaching and learning, work to reclaim the radical potential of joy.

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## APPENDIX A

### Course Syllabus

Course Title: HIST 243: History of Women in American Society

Course Taught: Fall 2016

### Instructor Information

Krista Grensavitch

### Course Description

This course provides an introductory survey of the cultural, social, political, and economic events and aspects of women's experiences for four centuries in the United States. Using gender as a category of historical analysis, it investigates how our understanding of U.S. History is maintained, challenged, or upended when women figure prominently in analysis and as historical actors. Additionally, it provides an introduction in historical methods in synthesizing, analyzing, citing, and writing with historical sources, both secondary sources (for example, the course textbook by historians, after events) and primary sources (for example, the additional visual and documentary sources provided in the textbook by participants in or observers of the past at the time of the events).

### Course Goals

- To achieve an understanding of American History, not as an inevitable saga of progress or 'manifest destiny' for Americans, but as a series of choices by Americans, in a human and continuing endeavor, often for benefit to some but at cost to others.
- To achieve an understanding of historiography, the process of reconstructing the past through the use of historical evidence, also a series of choices by historians in selecting arguments and topics to tell stories of the past, especially in selecting evidence from historical sources to support their arguments, which the result that some voices are heard and some voices are silenced.
- To identify the ways in which the concepts of the course affect our own lives.

### Required Materials

*Through Women's Eyes: An American History with Documents* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.), DuBois and Dumenil  
Any course readings posted online (students will be notified)

### Summary of Assignments

#### **Attendance & Participation – 20% [10% at Midterm and 10% at Final]**

Engaging in and contributing to meaningful class discussion is essential for this course. It is vital for you to attend all class meetings. Participation need not require speaking in every class discussion, but does require being ready and able to participate in discussion. If you do not participate verbally the entire term, it will be noticed and taken into account in your final grade. If you are concerned about this portion of your grade, please speak to me personally. The reason I count participation and attendance as such a large percentage of your grade is, in part, because learning is very much a social process: we learn from our interactions with others, the questions we ask, the responses we hear, the conversations we have. For this reason, discussions in the

course will be student-generated. By that, I mean you will be responsible for a large part of determining where discussions will go and what you find important, and why. I will certainly be part of discussions, but I expect you to be prepared to take part in the meaning-making process. You are required to bring a hard copy of the day's assigned reading with you to class (*TWE*, articles posted online, etc.).

### **Weekly Reading Responses & Discussion Questions – 30%**

You are required to complete a Weekly Reading Response and propose at least one reflective discussion question for the chapter introductions assigned to you. Unless otherwise indicated by the instructor, this recurring, weekly assignment is due every Tuesday, in class. This assignment comprises a large portion of your final grade because it is imperative that you keep up with the assigned readings. Our discussions and activities rely on an understanding of chronology and a working vocabulary of key texts and terms in Women's History. You will receive an assignment sheet that contains details, expectations, and a grading rubric.

In addition to the chapter introductions, you are also required to read several other sources every week. It is expected that you will read the chapter introduction and look over the accompanying visual and documentary source material by the first class meeting for the week. A more thorough reading and review of the accompanying source material is required for the week's second meeting. If it becomes obvious that students are coming to class with these readings not prepared, the instructor reserves the right to issue quizzes/other assignments to ensure that these important readings are completed.

### **Discussion Leader Session – 10%**

In groups of 5, students will be responsible for leading one class discussion. These groups will be pre-selected by the instructor. This assignment focuses on your reading and investigation of the visual and documentary sources provided at the end of every chapter. Along with your group members, you will choose 2-3 sources from the chapter, put them in conversation, contextualize these sources within the historical narrative of the chapter, pose discussion questions to your classmates, and facilitate the ensuing conversation. You are required to meet with your instructor, as a group, prior to your Discussion Leader Session to go over the sources you choose and your approach. You will receive an assignment sheet that contains details, expectations, and a grading rubric.

### **Midterm Project: Gendered Object Analysis – 10%**

The purpose of this assignments is to encourage you to be creative and experiment with the concepts and ideas that we are learning about in class. Furthermore, I want to see how you relate to course concepts personally, and how you envision these concepts to be acting in the world around you. You will receive an assignment sheet that contains details, expectations, and a grading rubric.

### **Final Project – 30%**

The Final Project for this course is a re-interpretation of Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party" that draws from local history. The project will be introduced early in the semester and you will spend time researching and completing the project over the course of the semester. Preparation for the

assignment will include a library visit, as well as other facilitated lessons. You will receive an assignment sheet that contains details, expectations, and a grading rubric.

**Breakdown for the Final Project grade is as follows:**

5% - Mid-point assignment

5% - Mid-point assignment

15% - Presentation and Final Product

5% - Written Reflection



## APPENDIX B

### **Assignment Sheet**

Assignment Title: Discussion Leader Groups

Course Title: HIST 243: History of Women in American Society

Course Taught: Fall 2016

### **Instructor Information**

Krista Grensavitch

### **Assignment Overview**

In small groups, students will be responsible for leading one class discussion. Unless otherwise indicated, discussion leader groups will be responsible for leading at least the first half of the day's class meeting time, so at least 40 minutes. Groups are pre-selected by the instructor (see the group lists at the end of this Assignment Sheet). Group-specific D2L discussion boards have been set up to help facilitate your group communication.

This assignment focuses on your reading and investigation of the visual and documentary sources provided at the end of every chapter. Along with your group members, you will choose 2-3 sources from the chapter, put them in conversation, contextualize these sources within the historical narrative of the chapter, pose discussion questions to your classmates, and facilitate the ensuing conversation.

The purpose of this assignment is to raise the level of our class conversations by assuring that a significant portion of the class have given extra, careful thought to the primary source materials and what we might learn from them.

### **Discussion Leader Session Preparation**

On the Tuesday (by 11:59 PM) before your Discussion Leader Session, you must notify your instructor which sources you will be considering. In addition, any handouts/AV requests (including any images you want projected) must be emailed to the instructor, as well as your three discussion questions. Collectively choose one group member as the instructor liaison – any feedback given by the instructor will be sent to this individual and it is the liaison's responsibility to communicate any changes or important instructor comments to the rest of the group.

### **Presentation Guidelines**

Each Discussion Leader session should follow a similar pattern:

- Summary and analysis of each source you choose
- Investigation of intersections of source material examples
- Rationale behind putting particular sources in intersection/conversation
- Discussion activity and/or facilitation

For each of the 2-3 primary sources you choose to investigate from the chapter, prepare the following:

- Provide a brief summary of the source that explains the main ideas or purpose you think it illustrates.

- Present a brief analysis of the source that offers some insight into the chapter reading and/or any additional information provided in our text about the primary source.
- Point out and define how the source illustrates key terms and concepts from the chapter readings or class discussions.

Then, you will consider the 2-3 primary sources in intersection, or in conversation. Prepare the following:

- Provide a discussion of how considering the sources together can uphold or complicate our understanding of the historical narrative presented in the text.
- Note any parallels, inconsistencies, complications, that arise when these sources are considered as a group.
- Explain: do you observe that any of the sources you consider are directly responding to another source? How so?
- Tell us what struck or captivated you about the source material you chose! Expand on how considering these examples in intersection challenges your assumptions or possibly the assumptions of others.
- Argue or defend: why is it important to consider the primary sources you chose, as opposed to relying on the received textual narrative?

Finally, your Discussion Group will present at least three discussion questions to the group and facilitate the ensuing discussion. Your questions should not merely ask for clarification. Rather, asking your classmates to consider social, political, economic, ideological, etc. contexts will make for a more fulfilling discussion. Your questions may not replicate those found at the end of the chapter.

Additionally, your group is welcome to facilitate a discussion activity – feel free to be in contact with the instructor if you have questions or ideas about this.

This assignment is not meant as a formal presentation or to be stressful. I encourage you all to be creative with the ways in which you communicate your ideas and encourage your classmates to do the same!

### **Discussion Leader Groups & Schedule**

**\*All Discussion Leader Groups present on Thursdays**

Group 1: 9/29; *TWE* Ch. 3

Group 2: 10/6; *TWE* Ch. 4

Group 3: 10/20; *TWE* Ch. 6

Group 4: 10/27; *TWE* Ch. 7

Group 5: 11/10; *TWE* Ch. 9

Group 6: 11/17; *TWE* Ch. 10

## Grading Sheet

### **Discussion Leader Session Preparation**

Communicated with instructor by 11:59 PM on Tuesday night, giving the following information

- 2-3 sources
- AV/Handouts needed
- 3 discussion questions

Adequately incorporated instructor feedback in Discussion Leader Presentation

### **Presenting Sources**

- Provides a brief **summary** of the source that explains the main ideas or purpose you think it illustrates.
- Presents a brief **analysis** of the source that offers some insight into the chapter reading and/or any additional information provided in our text about the primary source.
- Points out and define how the source illustrates **key terms and concepts** from the chapter readings or class discussions.

### **Considering Sources in Conversation**

- Provides a discussion of how considering the sources together can uphold or complicate our understanding of the historical narrative presented in the text.
- Notes any parallels, inconsistencies, complications, that arise when these sources are considered as a group.
- Explains: do you observe that any of the sources you consider are directly responding to another source? How so?
- Tells us what struck or captivated you about the source material you chose. Expands on how considering these examples in intersection challenges your assumptions or possibly the assumptions of others.
- Argues or defends: why is it important to consider the primary sources you chose, as opposed to relying on the received textual narrative?

### **Discussion Questions**

- Presents **at least three discussion questions** to the group and facilitates the ensuing discussion.
- Questions do not merely ask for clarification - asks classmates to consider social, political, economic, ideological, etc. contexts.
- Questions do not replicate those found at the end of the chapter.

### **Extras? (Activities, etc.)**

## APPENDIX C

### Assignment Sheet

Assignment Title: Final Project

Course Title: HIST 243: History of Women in American Society

Course Taught: Fall 2016

### Instructor Information

Krista Grensavitch

### Project and Due Date Timeline (assignment due dates in bold)

Thursday, 9/15	Final Project Introduction
Thursday, 9/22	Library Visit
Thursday, 10/6	Mid-point Assignment 1 due (in class)
Thursday, 10/13	In-Class Visit – Jordan from Wisconsin Quilt Museum
Thursday, 11/3	Class Trip – Jewish Museum of Milwaukee Visit
Tuesday, 11/8	In-Class Visit – Thomas Szolwinski, interior architect and furniture-maker
Thursday, 11/17	Mid-point Assignment 2 due (in class)
Tuesday, 11/22	In-class work day
Weeks 13 + 14	Final Presentations (Narratives due at the time of your presentation)
Tuesday, 12/13	Final Reflection due (in class)

### Grade Breakdown

2.5%	Mid-point assignment 1
2.5%	Mid-point assignment 2
10%	Historical Narrative – Biographical & Research and Process
10%	Presentation and Final Product
5%	Written Reflection

### Assignment Overview

The Final Project for this course is a re-interpretation of Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* that draws from local (Wisconsin and its immediate surrounds) history. *The Dinner Party*, first exhibited in 1979, seeks to address the repeated erasure of women's achievements from the historical and cultural record – following calls from pioneering women's historians like Gerda Lerner and Joan Scott, it seeks to position *women as subjects*. It also seeks to validate the position of women as artists and explores women's artistic legacy.

Following Chicago's reflection on informal communities of support – clusters of women who offered encouragement to one another – this Final Project will ask you to collaborate with me, your classmates, and a number of academic and community resources. However, each student will complete their own project. Over the course of the semester, our class will have a series of tutorials and class visits to help you prepare. As a group, we will decide how to arrange our Dinner Party.

This Final Project has several elements: written, artistic, and oral. You will be responsible for writing a brief (at least 500-word) historical-biographical narrative on the subject you choose.

This project also has an artistic element: like Chicago, you will create a place setting for your subject – this includes a plate and a decorated table runner, as well as any other additional elements you choose to add. Final Presentation time (5-7 minutes per student) will be spent giving a brief oral presentation on your subject, explaining both the life of the woman you choose as well as providing evidence and rationale for how and why you created your plate and table runner.

### **Choosing Your Subject**

You are to choose a woman from local history (Wisconsin and its immediate surrounds) who does NOT appear in the original *Dinner Party*. Each student will choose an original subject. Given the general dearth of evidence it is possible that you will undertake original research to investigate the life of the woman you choose. Mid-point Assignment 1 will facilitate your selection of a subject and help you to arrange research and sources for your narrative.

### **Completing Your Plate & Runner**

Based on your research findings, you will construct a table setting for your subject. You will be provided with both a plate and a piece of fabric to complete this part of your Final Project. This step will require your creativity – both in research (you might spend time digging in archives, evaluating primary documents and objects that others have not considered), and in your execution. However, *you will not be judged on artistic merit* – this part of the Final Project is not intended to make you feel stressed, but rather it encourages you to engage creatively with the subject matter and allows you a different kind of medium through which to represent your research findings. Based on the geographical and temporal context of your subject, as well as the identities of your subject (race, class, socio-economic status, etc.) different types of crafting traditions and design motifs were important or popular – you will represent these findings through your plate and runner. Mid-point Assignment 2 will facilitate your research to help you decide how to complete your plate and runner.

### **Writing Your Narrative**

Your narrative will be completed in two parts. First, use Chicago's biographical narratives as a model for how you should construct yours, which should be at least 500 words. Include your subject's name, lifespan, and location. In your narrative, discuss the significance of their life and their contributions to history: local, national, global. Using your preferred citation method, cite all relevant research used to complete this narrative. We will decide as a group on a template to display and organize this information. In the second part, you will discuss the crafting traditions of methods you researched and utilized; this part should also be at least 500 words. Again, use Chicago's research and process narrative as a model for how to construct your own.

### **Completing Your Written Reflection**

The final portion of this project is a written reflection in which you think back on your experiences working on this project, the challenges you faced, the experiences that were rewarding, the knowledge you created.

Your reflection should consider:

- What from this project have you learned?
- How did you apply the reading you did and the discussions we had to your project and presentation?

- What might you have done differently?
- What will you take from this experience (with this project and with this class)?
- How did you engage with objects and other non-textual sources through your research process?
- Any other questions or observations of note you wish to explore.
- This reflection should be at least 500 words.

### Helpful Resources:

- Wisconsin Historical Society ([wisconsinhistory.org](http://wisconsinhistory.org)) – fully searchable database with newspaper clippings, images, objects, and essays
- UWM Library – use the library search function
- UWM Special Collections (<http://uwmspeccoll.tumblr.com/tagged/UWM+Special+Collections>) - use their database and arrange for a visit.
- UWM Archives (<http://uwm.edu/libraries/archives/>) - use their database and arrange for a visit
- Milwaukee County Historical Society (<http://www.milwaukeehistory.net>) - fully searchable database.
- Washington County Historical Society (<http://www.historyisfun.com/research/digital-collections/>)
- *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee* (<https://emke.uwm.edu>) - the website is in the works, new entries will be added periodically, so check in frequently!
- Wisconsin Museum of Quilts and Fiber Arts (<http://wiqiltmuseum.com>) - contact their staff, including Education Coordinator and Collections Manager
- Jewish Museum of Milwaukee (<http://jewishmuseummilwaukee.org>) - explore the archives and visit or make a research request

## APPENDIX D

### Assignment Sheet

Assignment Title: Mid-Point Assignment 1 – Final Project

Course Title: HIST 243: History of Women in American Society

Course Taught: Fall 2016

### Instructor Information

Krista Grensavitch

### Assignment Overview

Mid-point Assignment 1 is meant to help you with several aspects of the Final Project:

- Choose your subject – A woman from local history, meaning Wisconsin and its immediate surrounds
  - BEFORE you commit to a subject, please be sure that there are available sources from which to conduct your research. Our initial library visit is meant to help you figure this out.
- Begin your biographical narrative – as a reminder, your biographical narrative will include your subject’s name, lifespan, and location. You will discuss the significance of their life and their contributions to history: local, national, and global.
- Additionally, it will also help you begin your research process, start summarizing and analyzing source material, and organize your sources

For this research process, Wikipedia is a fine place to start, but you are not allowed to cite Wikipedia as a source. Instead, use the footnotes and links to access the source cited and begin your research there.

### To successfully complete Mid-Point Assignment 1, you must:

- Provide an annotated bibliography of at least 3 sources
  - From the Cornell University Library Website, an annotated bibliography is: “a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.”
- Each annotated bibliography should include the following information
  1. Citation (in the style of your choice: APA, MLA, etc.) – you can easily find citation guides online. My favorite is the Purdue OWL: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
  2. Source Type (book, photograph, article, oral history, etc.)
  3. Summarization of Information Provided in the Source (this will vary in length, but try for at least 100 words)
  4. Evaluation Statement (reflect on the source’s relevance, accuracy, and quality)
- I recognize that research for your Biographical Narrative and Research Process Narrative will overlap. For this assignment, try to focus on researching and evaluating source material that will help you write your Biographical Narrative.

## APPENDIX E

### Assignment Sheet

Assignment Title: Mid-Point Assignment 2 – Final Project

Course Title: HIST 243: History of Women in American Society

Course Taught: Fall 2016

### Instructor Information

Krista Grensavitch

### Assignment Overview

Mid-point Assignment 2 is meant to help you research designs, images, crafting methods, and textile-creation techniques related to your subject.

- It may be helpful to begin your research by reviewing your annotated bibliography. For that assignment, you researched your subject's lifespan and location – here you will research images the elements stated above that are particular to your subject's time, place, and identity.

Again, for this research process, Wikipedia is a fine place to start, but you are not allowed to cite Wikipedia as a source. Instead, use the footnotes and links to access the source cited and begin your research there.

### To successfully complete Mid-Point Assignment 2, you must:

1. Provide an image or set of images that will inspire the creation of your table runner and/or plate.
  - Include the image/s (this could be a photograph of a person or place, a design motif, a page from a book, a map, an object, etc.)
  - A Citation (in the same formatting style you used for MP1)
  - A brief summary of the image/s, explaining why it is relevant to the life of your subject and how you plan to incorporate the image in the production of your table setting.

Note: the images you choose do not have to be produced by your subject – think of the significance of their life and work and choose an image that relates.

Tips: Search images from UWM's Digital Humanities Collection (like the *Wisconsin Arts Projects of the WPA, 1935-1943* or photographs of these same textiles that we saw in Special Collections); search the Wisconsin Historical Society Database; Search the Wisconsin Decorative Arts Database

2. Research a crafting method or a means of textile production related to your subject. Here, you will research methods and techniques particular to the time, geography, and/or identity of your subject.
  - Include citation/s
  - Provide a brief summary of how this means of production relates to the life of your subject, paying special attention to indicate how it is particular to your subject's time, location, and/or identity.

Tips: If you're able to find a historical interpretation of explanation of the images/objects you find, use that as your starting point for research.



3. Find at least one resource that facilitates your use of a crafting or textile production technique. This could be a YouTube video, an Instagram feed, a Pinterest board or post, a blog, a conversation with a family member, a visit to a place like the Wisconsin Quilt Museum, etc.
  - Include a citation for the resource/s
  - Provide a brief explanation of how this resource will help you to produce your plate or runner.

## APPENDIX F

### Artists' Statement

#### *The Supper Club*

Written in Conjunction with the Assignment: Final Project

Course Title: HIST 243: History of Women in American Society

Course Taught: Fall 2016

### Instructor Information

Krista Grensavitch

### THANK YOU FOR JOINING US FOR AN EXHIBIT OF:

*The Supper Club*

[suggested pronunciation: supp-HER club]

a reinterpretation of Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party*, based on local history

### Presented by members of HIST 243: History of Women in American Society

Reflecting upon our work creating *The Supper Club*, we identify several goals and initiatives we have sought to fulfill. We maintain that our work is:

- **Recuperative:** We seek to place women, their lives, ideas, and actions rightfully into existing historical accounts, thereby adding necessary information, context, and nuance to received history.
- **Commemorative:** Many of the individuals we represent here have passed, and too many have passed without receiving due recognition of value of their ideas and contributions during their own lifetimes. *The Supper Club* exists, in part, in memorial to these women.
- **Humanizing:** Reflecting on course material that we encountered on our semester-long investigation of the lives of women in American society, we conclude that when women appear in historical accounts, their presence and contributions are too often objectified. It is our explicit intent to represent our subjects in a humanizing way, emphasizing multiple aspects of their identities.
- **A Challenge:** Through our representation of our chosen subjects, we position ourselves, undergraduate students of history, as historical authorities. In many cases, we may be one of the few, or possibly the only, historical authority on our subject. Furthermore, we challenge who is a historical figure, who gets to represent them, how they are represented, and in what medium. It is our goal to maintain diversity in our representation – our subjects occupy a wide range of racial, ethnic, social, political, economic, and religious identities – and we allege that this challenges the androcentric and white-centric historical accounts we typically encounter. Our interaction with and reliance on objects, photographs, textiles, recorded interviews, poems, etc. to inform our investigations challenges the idea that history is that which is written down and that which is reproduced in texts.
- **Political:** According to Joan Scott, Women's History is an academic output of the Women's Movement and thereby is an initiative informed by feminist politics. We recognize that the creation of knowledge about women is a political act and we present knowledge we have created within the feminist context of Women's History. *Our goal in this project is for this*

*knowledge to challenge received interpretations of progress.* By centering women and their lived experiences, we not only challenge how history and historical accounts typically understand and characterize ‘progress’ – here, through narrative and through art, we seek to offer an alternative interpretation of what ‘progress’ looks like.

- **Rewarding:** Through our hard work, collaboration, investigation of crafting methods and techniques, time spent sifting through library holdings and online resources, we believe that we have created something meaningful and something bigger than ourselves.

We conclude that although we have narrowed our focus to a local context, we have found no lack of subjects. It is our hope that groups of students in the future can take on a project similar to this one, thereby bringing to light – and bringing to the table – more women deserving of historical recognition. Ultimately, our wish is that courses like this did not have to exist.

We call for women’s history – and the accounts of all marginalized populations – to be incorporated in all the ways in which we tell history.

#### **Notes about materials and construction:**

- Our central table was designed in collaboration with furniture fabricator Thomas Szolwinski. The top of the table is planked with boards sourced from an 1860s barn that still stands in Thiensville, WI.
- The fabrication methods used to make our table runners and design motifs we incorporated pay homage to the lives, locations, time periods, and identities of our individual subjects.

• ***The Supper Club* was researched and created by members of HIST 243: History of Women in American Society in the Fall Semester of 2016. Class members include:**

Mia Anderson	Lauren Kotowski	Jessica Pulvermacher
Leah Biller	Natalie Kugler	Adriana Ramirez
Riley Bohage	Hailey Lippold	McKenna Sandberg
Jordyn Campbell-Dodd	Aniyah Luckett	J’Breanna Smith
Ciera Carey	Corinne Luczak	Petelyn Sulureh
Lara Geib	Emily Murphy	BeeJay Thao
Jose Gonzalez-Villareal	Katie Naud	Yu Thao
Dimera Green	Ashley Nazario	Zoe Whorrall
Louisa Gregory	Katie Newton	Jun Wilkinson
Me Htway	Andrea Orozco	Anna Woerishofer
Kathleen Hurley	Kayla Paepke	Krista Grensavitch
Elizabeth Kaempfer	Stephanie Pawleski	

**We recognize and thank members of the UWM and surrounding academic community who assisted in and supported our research:**

Sarah Anne Carter and the Chipstone Foundation  
Merry Wiesner-Hanks – UWM History Department  
Kate Ganski – UWM Golda Meir Library User Services  
Tyler Smith – UWM Golda Meir Library User Services

Ann Hanlon – UWM Digital Collection and Initiatives  
Abbi Nye – UWM Archives  
Max Yela – UWM Special Collections  
Ellie Gettinger – Jewish Museum of Milwaukee  
Jordan Gibbon – Wisconsin Museum of Quilts and Fiber Arts  
Thomas Szolwinski – Furniture Designer and Fabricator  
Allain Daigle – Producer, Tiny Owl Media  
Danielle Bilder – Seamstress  
UWM History Department  
UWM Women’s and Gender Studies DLB  
UWM Digital Humanities Lab

**We also thank our friends, family members, and local resources who provided instructional skills and support. A far-from-exhaustive list of those individuals we wish to recognize and thank for their collaboration:**

Casey O’Brien	Karen Sobota
Angel Gonzalez	Betty Cushing
Angelica Villarreal	Lisa Murphy
Lori Mann	Michelle Luczak
Becky Gobermann	Luz Acosta
Always in Stitches (Green Bay)	Joanie Green
Karen Sandberg	Christina Keyser
Angela Hein	Sharon Grametz
Emma Kaempfer	Camille Naud
Lisa Balistreri-Geib	Paula Sauter
Robin Block	Amanda Nazario
UWM Students Art and Crafts Center	Kaylah Antczak
Aprielle Kugler	Loretta Wilkinson
Lucas Kannenberg	Jon Watts
Pam Nieskes	Pao Khoua Vue

## APPENDIX G

### Teaching and Learning Video Resource

Title: *Creating The Supper Club: Interpreting Judy Chicago's The Dinner Party*

Link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_eV5G2R6\\_mI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_eV5G2R6_mI)

Location: The Chipstone Foundation's YouTube page

Published: May 24, 2017

### Descriptive Text:

This video traces the production, presentation, and reflection on a final project assigned for History of Women in American Society, a course taught in the Fall of 2016 by Krista Grensavitch at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. For the final project, the students collaborated to create The Supper Club, a local reinterpretation of Judy Chicago's The Dinner Party. First exhibited in 1979, The Dinner Party seeks to address the repeated erasure of women's achievements from the historical and cultural record. Following calls from pioneering women's historians like Gerda Lerner and Joan Scott, it seeks to position women as subjects. It also seeks to validate the position of women as artists and explores women's artistic legacy. In The Supper Club, the students and instructor figure women in Wisconsin's history – many of whom are missing from or for whom only traces exist in the historical record – as historical subjects with a seat at the table. This reinterpretation follows Chicago's investigation of women's history and traditionally-feminized craft and art production techniques. It also takes Chicago's project as a model for collaboration: Chicago recognizes the importance of informal communities of support - clusters of women who offered encouragement and information to one another. Students, their instructor, academic and artistic resources from UWM and beyond worked together in the production of their final project and a gallery show which introduced their work to the campus community.

This video, by Allain Daigle, is meant to provide both a framework and reflective statements for similar kinds of artistic reinterpretations within a higher ed classroom. The Chipstone Foundation was a proud sponsor of this project.

## APPENDIX H

### Course Syllabus

Course Title: WGS 201: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

Course Taught: Spring 2018

### Instructor Information

Krista Grensavitch

### Course Description

This course is designed as an introduction to the interdisciplinary field of Women's and Gender Studies, an academic area of study focused on the ways that sex and gender manifest themselves in social, cultural, and political contexts. The primary goal of this course is to familiarize students with key issues, questions, and debates in Women's and Gender Studies scholarship, both historical and contemporary. This semester, we will become acquainted with many of the critical questions and concepts feminist scholars have developed as tools for thinking about gendered experience. In addition, we will study interconnections among systems of oppression (sexism, racism, classism, ethnocentrism, homophobia/heterosexism, transphobia, ableism, etc.). We will also learn to 'read' and analyze gender, exploring how it impacts one's understanding of and experiences in the world. Together and with our course texts, we will analyze competing perspectives and integrate various bodies of knowledge across traditional academic boundaries. In addition, we will apply critical thinking skills to identify and assess gender-based assumptions and biases in order to recognize their consequences on an individual, social, and cultural level.

### Course Goals

- Discuss Women's and Gender Studies as a critical, scholarly discipline and as a manifestation of feminism.
- Define key terms such as feminism, sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, heterosexism, biphobia, transphobia, gender phobia, ageism, misogyny, androcentrism, patriarchy, oppression, internalized oppression, institutional power, privilege, prejudice, and empowerment.
- Discuss theories of oppression and privilege and the feminist principle that 'the personal is political.'
- Demonstrate an understanding of social constructions of gender, sexuality, race, and class.
- Explain feminist analyses of social institutions such as family, health care, media, religion, legal systems, work and labor, and education.
- Identify contributions of feminism and the women's rights movement to women's existing rights, and identify struggles for equality that exist in the world today.
- Identify the ways in which the concepts of the course affect our own lives.

### Required Materials

1. *Threshold Concepts in Women's and Gender Studies*, (1st ed.) by Launius & Hassel
2. *Feminism is for Everybody* (any edition) by bell hooks
3. Any course readings posted on D2L

## **Summary of Assignments**

### **1. Attendance & Participation – 25% [10% at Midterm and 15% at Final]**

Engaging in and contributing to meaningful class discussion is essential for this course. It is vital for you to attend all class meetings. Participation need not require speaking in every class discussion, but does require being ready and able to participate in discussion. If you do not participate verbally the entire term, it will be noticed and considered in your final grade. If you are concerned about this portion of your grade, please speak to me personally. The reason I count participation and attendance as such a large percentage of your grade is, in part, because learning is very much a social process: we learn from our interactions with others, the questions we ask, the responses we hear, the conversations we have. For this reason, discussions in the course will be student-generated. By that, I mean you will be responsible for a large part of determining where discussions will go and what you find important, and why. I will certainly be part of discussions, but I expect you to be prepared to take part in the meaning-making process. You are required to bring a hard copy of the day's assigned reading with you to class (articles posted online, etc.). There are several assignments throughout the course of the semester (e.g. Interview Assignment, *Androgyny* Engagement Activity, etc.) that will count toward your Attendance & Participation grade.

### **2. Reading Responses – 25%**

Over the course of the semester, you will be given six Reading Responses (RRs) to complete. Your lowest RR will be dropped. Unless otherwise indicated, this recurring assignment will be due in-class as indicated on the Course Schedule; you will receive a prompt for each RR. Prompts will be available on our D2L course site.

This assignment comprises a large portion of your final grade because it is imperative that you keep up with the assigned readings. Our discussions and activities rely on an understanding and working vocabulary of key texts and terms in Women's and Gender Studies. It is expected that you will come to the first meeting of the week having read all of the articles indicated for that week. If it becomes obvious that students are coming to class with these readings not prepared, the instructor reserves the right to issue quizzes/other assignments to ensure that these important readings are completed.

### **3. Object Lessons & Reflections – 15%**

Over the course of the semester, we will spend five class periods considering material objects and you will complete Object Reflections (ORs) based on the Object Lessons, or your in-class encounters with these objects. Unless otherwise indicated, you will receive a physical prompt for each OR at the start of the Object Lesson class period. The OR will be due, in-class, on the following class meeting. This means that in order for you to receive credit for each OR, you must be present in class to receive the OR prompt and to participate in the Object Lesson. Your lowest OR will be dropped, allowing you one 'oops' or missed Object Lesson class period. See the Course Schedule for Object Lesson dates and meeting locations.

#### **4. Discussion Leader Group – 15%**

For each chapter we read and discuss, several of you will be assigned to a Discussion Leader Group (DLG) and will lead class discussion on the assigned article readings. Members of the DLG will summarize the article readings assigned for that day, consider them in conversation (noting parallels, tensions, etc.), place them in the context of the chapter introduction (noting how the articles illustrate important key terms and concepts), and highlight relevant examples (current events, videos, other articles). DLGs will also be responsible for creating several discussion questions to pose to the class and facilitating the ensuing discussion.

#### **5. Final Presentation & Reflection – 20%**

For this project, you are asked to work as an individual or in small groups to expand upon ideas and themes investigated over the course of the semester. This project will include research, critical engagement, and analysis; you will draw from both primary and secondary sources. You will be instructed to work on your project intermittently throughout the last part of the semester, and groups will present projects to the class in the final week of class.

The final portion of this project is a written reflection in which you think back on your experiences working with a group on this project, the challenges you faced, the experiences that were rewarding, and the knowledge you created. While this is a group project, you will each receive an individual grade and your final reflection will help me assign your grade.



## APPENDIX I

### Assignment Sheet

Assignment Title: Engagement Activity, *Androgyny*

Course Title: WGS 201, Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

Course Taught: Spring 2018

### Instructor Information

Krista Grensavitch

### Assignment Introduction

For this Engagement Activity, I'm happy to share the work of my friend Lois Bielefeld with you all. Lois is a locally-based fine artist and commercial photographer. [Link to Bielefeld's biography on her website.]

### Part 1: Critical Viewing

To complete this Engagement Activity, please do the following:

- Spend some time looking at and considering some of Lois' work. Please spend time in careful consideration of the following pieces (each is part of a multi-media series of work entitled *Androgyny*):
  - *Androgyny*, Photographic Portrait Series [Link provided]
  - *The Bathroom* (7:05), an Interactive Audio Installation Piece [Link provided]
  - *Girl Boy Both* (15:34), a Video Documentary [Link provided]
  - Allow yourself time to reflect - I encourage you to revisit the indicated pieces after you initial viewing/watching/listening.

### Submission Guidelines

- Then, complete the written part of EA2 by addressing the following prompts:
  1. Using information presented in the *TC* chapter and the Stryker reading for this week to contextualize, provide a personal reflection on the three pieces you viewed. Describe for me:
    - How did viewing the pieces make you feel?
    - Is there an image/part of any of the videos that stands out to you? What was it - and why do you think it stands out to you?
    - Did any of the images or parts of the video make you feel uncomfortable? If so, why? What did you do with that feeling? I encourage you to engage in substantial critical self-reflection here - use the readings for this week as a critical lens to begin interpreting your reactions.
  2. If applicable to your life, reflect on a time in your life that you have mis-gendered another individual (even in your mind) or have been mis-gendered yourself.
  3. Comment on the medium: photography and video. How were you informed and challenged to think about the Social Construction of Gender when it was presented as art?
  4. Include one carefully-constructed discussion question that you would pose to the artist, Lois Bielefeld.

## APPENDIX J

### Course Schedule

Course Title: WGS 201, Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

Course Taught: Spring 2018

### Instructor Information

Krista Grensavitch

Week & Topic	Assigned Readings [all articles are found on D2L]	Activities & Assignments Due
<b>W1: Course Introduction</b>	<b>hooks:</b> "Come Closer to Feminism" (for 1/25)	T: 'I am/am not a feminist because...' R: DLG Intro; Interview Assignment Intro
<b>W2: Introduction to Feminism &amp; WGS</b>	<b>Threshold Concepts (TC):</b> Ch. 1 – Introduction <b>hooks:</b> "Feminist Politics" <b>Articles:</b> Baumgardner & Richards	T: Reading Response (RR) 1 (in-class); Interview Assignment due R: [LGBT RC Visit]
<b>W3: The Social Construction of Gender</b>	<b>TC:</b> Ch. 2 – The Social Construction of Gender <b>hooks:</b> "Beauty Within and Without;" "Feminist Masculinity"	T: RR 2 R: <i>Androgyny</i> Activity
<b>W4</b>	<b>Articles:</b> Lorber, Coyote, Ingraham	T: DLG 1/2 R: Object 1 & Reflection
<b>W5: Privilege &amp; Oppression</b>	<b>TC:</b> Ch. 3 – Privilege & Oppression <b>hooks:</b> "Race and Gender;" "Consciousness Raising" <b>**Article (for 2/22):</b> McIntosh	T: RR 3; OL 1 due; Final Presentation Intro R: <i>Code Switch</i> Activity
<b>W6</b>	<b>Articles:</b> Hill Collins; Rankine; (McIntosh)	T: DLG 3/4 R: Object 2 & Reflection
<b>W7: Intersectionality</b>	<b>TC:</b> Ch. 4 – Intersectionality <b>hooks:</b> "Feminist Class Struggle;" "Women at Work"	T: RR 4; OL 2 due R: <i>She's Beautiful When She's Angry</i>
<b>W8</b>	<b>Articles:</b> Anzaldua; Lorde; DeMello	T: DLG 5/6 R: Object 3 & Reflection
<b>W9: NO CLASS</b>	No assigned readings: <b>SPRING BREAK</b>	

<b>W10: Feminist Praxis</b>	<b>TC:</b> Ch. 5 – Feminist Praxis <b>hooks:</b> “Feminist Education for Critical Consciousness;” “Visionary Feminism”	T: RR 5; OL 3 due R: Final Presentation Topic Proposal due
<b>W11</b>	<b>Articles:</b> Shrewsbury; Talusan; Danticat	T: DLG 7/8 R: Object 4 & Reflection
<b>W12:</b>	N/A	T: OL 4 due; Final Presentation Worksheet & Workday
<b>W13: Special Topic: Gender Violence &amp; Consent</b>	<b>Articles:</b> Cat Person; Defining Consent	T: RR 6 R: Object 5 & Reflection
<b>W14: Final Presentations</b>	N/A	T: OL 5 due; Final Presentations R: Final Presentations
<b>W15: Final Presentations</b>	N/A	T: Final Presentations R: Final Presentations
<b>W16: Course Wrap-Up</b>	N/A	T: Final Presentations R: Course Wrap-up

### Object Lessons & Reflection Schedule

<b>Date</b>	<b>Object</b>	<b>Meeting Location</b>	<b>Additional Facilitator</b>
Thursday, 2/15	Object 1: Lou Sullivan Pamphlet	NWQ 1871	Brice Smith
Thursday, 3/1	Object 2: Textiles from the Milwaukee Handicrafts Project	Special Collections – 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Golda Meir Library	Max Yela
Thursday, 3/15	Object 3: Vel Phillips Photographs	Special Collections	Abbi Nye
Thursday, 4/5	Object 4: Paintings in the Emile Mathis Gallery	UWM Art Gallery (Mitchell 170)	Leigh Mahlik
Thursday, 4/19	Object 5: Ginny Ray dolls	Special Collections	Abbi Nye

## APPENDIX K

### Assignment Sheet

Assignment Title: Object Reflection 1

Course Title: WGS 201, Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

Course Taught: Spring 2018

### Instructor Information

Krista Grensavitch

### Object Investigation & Reflection 1

Topic: The Social Construction of Gender

Object/s: Lou Sullivan's Pamphlet

### Pre-Object Encounter

Reflect: How do you imagine an object might be able to challenge your understanding of the topic we've been investigating for the last two weeks: "The Social Construction of Gender"?

- How might an object be uniquely suited to explore the topic, perhaps in a way that the texts we've read weren't able to address?

### Investigating the Object

Provide a brief sketch (in words, drawings, diagrams, etc.) of the object under consideration (attach additional pages, if necessary). Imagine, observe, and speculate and consider:

- What is it?
- What does it represent?
- What is it made of?
- What date is it?
- Who made it?
- Is it the only one?
- Where is it now?
- What condition is it in?
- What is its economic value?
- What is it worth, and to whom?
- Who owned it, and how did they acquire it?
- What was its function?

### Post-Object Encounter

**Critically Engage:** Identify at least one passage/point from the three assigned articles for this unit (Lorber, Coyote, Ingraham) and describe how your encounter with the object, our class discussion of it, or any reflections you came away with challenges your understanding of how gender is socially constructed.

**Reflect:** In your opinion, what was the value of considering this object? Regarding the social construction of gender:

- What questions did it answer?
- What questions did it raise?
- What questions remain?

## APPENDIX L

### Assignment Sheet

Assignment Title: Object Reflection 2

Course Title: WGS 201, Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

Course Taught: Spring 2018

### Instructor Information

Krista Grensavitch

Topic: Privilege and Oppression

Object/s: Examples from the Milwaukee Handicrafts Project (a WPA project)

### Pre-Object Encounter

Reflect: How do you imagine an object might be able to challenge your understanding of the topic we've been investigating for the last two weeks: "Privilege and Oppression"?

- How might an object be uniquely suited to explore the topic, perhaps in a way that the texts we've read weren't able to address?

### Investigating the Object

Provide a brief sketch (in words, drawings, diagrams, etc.) of the object under consideration (attach additional pages, if necessary). Imagine, observe, and speculate and consider:

- What is it?
- What does it represent?
- What is it made of?
- What date is it?
- Who made it?
- Is it the only one?
- Where is it now?
- What condition is it in?
- What is its economic value?
- What is it worth, and to whom?
- Who owned it, and how did they acquire it?
- What was its function?

### Post-Object Encounter

**Critically Engage:** Identify at least one passage/point from the three assigned articles for this unit (McIntosh, Rankine, Hill Collins) and describe how your encounter with the object, our class discussion of it, or any reflections you came away with challenges your understanding of privilege and oppression.

**Reflect:** Consider your encounter with the objects in conjunction with the selections from *Useful Work for Unskilled Women* (copies distributed in class and PDF available on D2L).

- How did information from this secondary source help refine your understanding of the Milwaukee Handicrafts Project as a site for investigating privilege and oppression, particularly within Milwaukee?
- Choose at least one passage from *Useful Work* and discuss how the contextualizing information helped you to better understand the objects we encountered this week.

## APPENDIX M

### Assignment Sheet

Assignment Title: Object Reflection 3

Course Title: WGS 201, Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

Course Taught: Spring 2018

### Instructor Information

Krista Grensavitch

Topic: Intersectionality

Object/s: Photographs of Vel Phillips

### Pre-Object Encounter

Reflect: How do you imagine an object might be able to challenge your understanding of the topic we've been investigating for the last two weeks: "Intersectionality"?

- How might an object be uniquely suited to explore the topic, perhaps in a way that the texts we've read weren't able to address?

### Investigating the Object

Provide a brief sketch (in words, drawings, diagrams, etc.) of the object under consideration (attach additional pages, if necessary). Imagine, observe, and speculate and consider:

- What is it?
- What does it represent?
- What is it made of?
- What date is it?
- Who made it?
- Is it the only one?
- Where is it now?
- What condition is it in?
- What is its economic value?
- What is it worth, and to whom?
- Who owned it, and how did they acquire it?
- What was its function?

### Post-Object Encounter

**Critically Engage:** Identify at least one passage/point from the three assigned articles for this unit (Anzaldua, Lorde, DeMello) and describe how your encounter with the object, our class discussion of it, or any reflections you came away with challenges your understanding of intersectionality/using an intersectional lens to analyze a topic/object/experience.

**Reflect:** Consider your encounter with the objects in conjunction with a selection of a panel interview with Alderperson Vel Phillips from the show "Milwaukee Reports" recorded on October 11, 1963. In the program, Alderperson Phillips responds to questions posed by a panel. A link to the audio is available on D2L – listen from the beginning to the 15:30 mark.

**\*\*Note about language:** this audio recording uses the term 'negro/es' to refer to African American/Black individuals. This is a term in relatively common use in the 1960s; today many communities consider this term obsolete/a slur.

- Cite a response in which you believe Alderperson Phillips utilizes an intersectional approach to answering a question.

- How does considering this source in conjunction with the photographs help expand your understanding of intersectionality?

## APPENDIX N

### Assignment Sheet

Assignment Title: Object Reflection 4

Course Title: WGS 201, Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

Course Taught: Spring 2018

### Instructor Information

Krista Grensavitch

Topic: Feminist Praxis

Object/s: Objects in the Emile Mathis Gallery (in UWM's Art History Department)

### Pre-Object Encounter

Reflect: How do you imagine an object might be able to challenge your understanding of the topic we've been investigating for the last two weeks: "Feminist Praxis"?

- How might an object be uniquely suited to explore the topic, perhaps in a way that the texts we've read weren't able to address?

### Investigating the Object

In "We've Always Been Nasty," Meredith Talusan discusses the role of **gender essentialism** in our culture, suggesting that expectations for women's proper behavior are not rejected strongly enough.

- Identify one piece in the collection that seems to adhere to norms dictated by gender essentialism – consider, how does it do so?
- Identify one piece in the collection that seems to defy norms dictated by gender essentialism – again, consider, how does it do so?
- (Include a rough sketch of each object you choose.)

### Post-Object Encounter

**Critically Engage:** In "What is Feminist Pedagogy," writer Carolyn Shrewsbury discusses the components that make up a feminist classroom, suggesting that it is a space central and essential to social change and feminist revolution.

- Choose at least one passage from her article and discuss how you might (or might not!) interpret the gallery space as a feminist classroom.
- Specify: what elements of the gallery facilitate or prohibit the formation of a feminist classroom?

**Reflect:** Consider the context of our visit for this Object Lesson – an art gallery – in contrast to the context/location of our other object encounters.

- How did being in an art gallery impact your encounter of the objects under study?
- How was it similar or different to our other object encounters?
- How did the space make you feel?



## APPENDIX O

### Assignment Sheet

Assignment Title: Object Reflection 5

Course Title: WGS 201, Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

Course Taught: Spring 2018

### Instructor Information

Krista Grensavitch

Topic: Gender Violence & Consent

Object/s: WAR Dolls

### Pre-Object Encounter

Reflect: How do you imagine an object might be able to challenge your understanding of the topic we've been investigating for the last week: gender-based violence and consent?

- How might an object be uniquely suited to explore the topic, perhaps in a way that the texts we've read weren't able to address?

### Investigating the Object

Provide a brief sketch (in words, drawings, diagrams, etc.) of the object under consideration (attach additional pages, if necessary). Imagine, observe, and speculate and consider:

- What is it?
- What does it represent?
- What is it made of?
- What date is it?
- Who made it?
- Is it the only one?
- Where is it now?
- What condition is it in?
- What is its economic value?
- What is it worth, and to whom?
- Who owned it, and how did they acquire it?
- What was its function?

### Post-Object Encounter

**Critically Engage:** Identify at least one passage/point from the three assigned articles for this unit (Roupenian, "Consent Accidents and Consent Violations;" "A Plea to Stop Saying Yes to Sex When You Really Want to Say No") and describe how your encounter with the object, our class discussion of it, or any reflections you came away with challenges your understanding of consent.

- Pay special consideration to audience in your critical analysis: consider who the dolls are meant for and who the intended audience of the articles is – discuss how recognizing audience might impact your understanding of consent.

**Reflect:** Consider your encounter with the objects in conjunction with the MPS curriculum resources presented by Archivist Abbi Nye.

- Cite an example from the curriculum resource that stood out to you – explain why it stood out to you.
- How does considering this source in conjunction with the dolls help expand your understanding of consent?

- How does considering this source in conjunction with the dolls help expand your understanding of feminist praxis?

## APPENDIX P

### Teaching and Learning Video Resource

Title: *Memory Keepers*

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dWmPOFxo9U>

Location: The Chipstone Foundation's YouTube page

Published: December 17, 2018

### Descriptive Text:

This video traces a semester-long assignment series in an Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies course taught in the Fall of 2018 by Krista Grensavitch at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM). The assignment series, titled Object Lessons, asked students to learn through, and with, material things, by continually pursuing a central question: "where do texts fail us, and how are objects uniquely suited to both identify and fill these silences?" In collaboration with Special Collections at UWM's Golda Meir Library, students drew upon their knowledge of women's and gender studies to investigate the idea of consent. Considering both curricula from Milwaukee Public Schools as well as dolls meant to teach young children about sexual violence and consent, students utilized lenses like intersectionality and privilege in their investigation of creating and maintaining consent.

This video, by Allain Daigle, is meant to provide both a framework and reflective statements for similar kinds of critical thinking skills development within a higher education classroom. The Chipstone Foundation was a proud sponsor of this project.

## APPENDIX Q

### Experiment in Education

*Encyclopedia of Milwaukee* Entry: Holy Hill

[In progress; not yet available with *EMKE*]

#### 1. Introduction

- □ This Experiment in Education builds from the *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee* (*EMKE*) entry titled “Holy Hill” and is meant for use within an introductory-level college classroom, one that explores the intersection of categories of identity (e.g. race, gender, nationality, ability, religious affiliation, age) and the impact that may have on the use of space.

#### 2. Sources

- **EMKE Entry**  
“Holy Hill” entry: <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/holy-hill/>
- **EMKE Primary Sources** (Images)  
“View From Holy Hill:” <https://emke.uwm.edu/advanced-search/?swpquery=holy+hill&search-type=images>  
“Holy Hill National Shrine:” <https://emke.uwm.edu/advanced-search/?search-type=images&swpquery=holy%20hill>  
“Holy Hill Basilica:” <https://emke.uwm.edu/advanced-search/?search-type=images&swpquery=holy%20hill>
- **EMKE Experiment in Education Video**  
“Holy Hill:” <https://vimeo.com/341866381>

#### 3. Teaching and Learning Strategies

- Students should be familiar with the idea that they are situated: that they inhabit certain categories of identity (like gender, race, class, sexual orientation, age, ability, etc.) and these identities (and how they intersect) have bearing on how they move around in the world, dictating what kinds of space they do (or do not have access) to. Students need not have a sophisticated understanding of this, but a general understanding that identities (theirs included) can work to both prohibit and allow.
- **Trigger/Content Warning Suggestion**  
This Experiment in Education asks students to consider the use of a religious space. Discussions of religion and religious practices may become contentions. Therefore, consider having a conversation with students in which you ask them to take care to engage in the work asked of them from a place that seeks to build empathy and understanding. If the class has a brave or safe space policy in place, re-present the policy to students, asking them if they anticipate that certain agreements/principles in the policy may be salient given the topic of the activity.

#### 4. Lesson Plan [Intended for use in HIST 150: Multicultural America, an introductory-level history course offered at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee]

- **Time Estimate**

This assignment will take approximately one seventy-five minute face-to-face class session to complete.

- **Learning Objectives** (Calder and Steffes)  
After completing this Experiment in Education, students will be able to: [TBD, with input from *EMKE* editors]
- **Technology suggestions/requirements**  
Students will need to access and read the *EMKE* entry “Holy Hill” (about 250 words, without footnotes). The entry could be projected and read using a classroom projector and screen/s, students could read it on their own computers/mobile devices, or the instructor could print off copies of the entry for students to read alone or in groups (please consider the digital options, which do not waste paper).  
Students will need access to the websites listed under the “Sources” heading. This includes several images from the *EMKE* website as well as a brief (1:12) video. The video includes sound. Again, these could be projected/played using an in-classroom projector and screen/s, or students could access them on their own computers or mobile devices. It is advised that students watch the video as a group, as multiple computers/mobile devices playing the audio track could be very distracting.
- **Necessary physical materials**  
N/A
- **Lesson Outline**  
[TBD, with input from *EMKE* editors]  
Generally, the lesson will ask students to consider terms used to classify use of space including: public, private, religious, tourist, etc. The assignment will ask students to develop a baseline assessment based on their reading of the *EMKE* entry, and then re-evaluate that assessment (and associated meanings) after viewing the *EMKE* primary source images and then the video. The instructor will present each assessment as a think-pair-share activity in which students first individually consider their response to a prompt, then share it with one to two classmates, and then share out to members of the entire class. Along the way, students will be asked to consider their responses as they are created through the lens of their own personal experience and identities, beginning to interrogate how their identities (or others’) can permit or prohibit access to certain spaces, including the built environment. In a final prompt that asks students to more closely consider issues associated with scale, students will compare and contrast Holy Hill as an architectural space, as it is presented in the images and the video. As an optional assignment, the instructor could ask students (as individuals or in small groups) to create a video that seeks to capture a first-person experience of the built environment, paying special attention to how that space is utilized and how that use may be subject change over time (in the short or long term).
- **Suggested modifications for grade/ability level**  
N/A

## 5. Resources

- For more examples of more videos like the one created for this assignment, visit Spirit of Space's website: <https://www.spiritofspace.com/> and Vimeo page: <https://vimeo.com/spiritofspace>. Spirit of Space films, edits, designs, and produces short videos, like the one created for this Experiment in Education, and believes that “buildings tell stories.” Their work maintains that design and architecture should remain accessible and that experiencing architectural and designed spaces (through their videos) should work to create empathy. Using the video and information from Spirit of Space as a framework, an instructor (or students) could create similar videos using a smart phone and simple video editing software.
- HIST 150 is a course associated with UWM's Cultures & Communities, a program that “promot[es] and strength[s] the university's engagement with the Milwaukee community.” Find more information about the unit, along with a list of shared learning goals, here: <https://uwm.edu/cultures-communities/students/learning-goals/>.
- For more information about the learning objectives that framed this assignment, consult *Measuring College Learning in History* (Lendol Calder and Tracy Steffes): <http://highered.ssrc.org/wp-content/uploads/MCL-in-History.pdf>
- **About the author:** this Experiment in Education was created by Krista Grensavitch (she/her/hers). She is a PhD candidate in History and holds an MA in Women's and Gender Studies, both from The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Her research is at the intersection of material culture theory, feminist pedagogy, and the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). The video was created by Krista Grensavitch in collaboration with Allain Daigle (he/him/his). He holds a PhD in English from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and produces his own video work through Tiny Owl Media.

## APPENDIX R

### Experiment in Education

*Encyclopedia of Milwaukee* Entry: Increase Lapham  
[In progress; not yet available with *EMKE*]

#### 1. Introduction

- This Experiment in Education builds from the *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee (EMKE)* entry titled “Increase Lapham” and is meant for use within an introductory-level college classroom, one that presents material objects, along with texts, as objects of study and texts to learn through, with, and from.

#### 2. Sources

- **EMKE Entry**  
“Increase Lapham” entry: <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/increase-lapham/>
- **EMKE Primary Sources (Images)**  
“Increase A. Lapham:” <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/increase-a-lapham/>
- **EMKE Experiment in Education Video**  
“Increase Lapham’s Shaving Kit:” <https://vimeo.com/341847737>

#### 3. Teaching and Learning Strategies

- Students should be familiar with methods and theories related to object-based teaching and learning. Students need not have a sophisticated understanding of this, but a general understanding that objects, along with texts, and other types of source material, are valid and authoritative sources to consider when creating a historical account or investigating a historical topic.
- **Trigger/Content Warning Suggestion**  
Depending on the objects chosen and the meaning those objects hold and/or make, students should be aware that they could issue trigger/content warnings for the videos they create.

#### 4. Lesson Plan [Intended for use in HIST 192: Thinking with Things: History and Material Culture, an introductory-level history course offered at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee]

- **Time Estimate**  
This assignment will take approximately two to three seventy-five minute face-to-face class sessions to complete. Additionally, students will complete an assignment that asks them to create their own video in which they record their physical investigation of an object in UWM’s Archives or Special Collections; this assignment will take approximately three to five hours to complete. Instructors should allow for classroom time in Special Collections or Archives in which a librarian instructor helps students choose an object, discusses issues related to preservation and access, and generally

responds to student questions requests related to the assignment.

- **Learning Objectives** (Calder and Steffes)

After completing this Experiment in Education, students will be able to: [TBD, with input from *EMKE* editors]

- **Technology suggestions/requirements**

Students will need to access and read the *EMKE* entry “Increase Lapham” (about 475 words, without footnotes). The entry could be projected and read using a classroom projector and screen/s, students could read it on their own computers/mobile devices, or the instructor could print off copies of the entry for students to read alone or in groups (please consider the digital options, which do not waste paper).

Students will need access to the websites listed under the “Sources” heading. This includes several images from the *EMKE* website as well as a relatively short (7:27) video. The video includes sound. Again, the video could be projected/played using an in-classroom projector and screen/s, or students could access them on their own computers or mobile devices. It is advised that students watch the video as a group, as multiple computers/mobile devices playing the audio track could be very distracting. It is especially important that audio is available, as the video seeks to capture part of the sensory experience of engaging with the object featured in the video.

- **Necessary physical materials**

Video and audio filming devices, as available from UWM’s Media Reserve Library: <https://uwm.edu/libraries/media/media-equipment-for-loan/>

- **Lesson Outline**

[TBD, with input from *EMKE* editors]

This lesson and associated assignment will ask students to consider issues related to personally/materially engaging with material culture. First, instructors will prompt discussion by asking how the video compels students to ask new or different questions of Increase Lapham and his historic legacy. In a class discussion, students will consider what bearing a material object (and rather strange one) like a shaving kit can contribute to our understanding of received historical narratives. In small groups, and then as a whole class, students will brainstorm paths for historical inquiry based that connect the shaving kit to themes present in the *EMKE* entry about Increase Lapham. Then, along with librarian instructors from Special Collections and/or Archives at UWM’s Golda Meir Library (and possibly from UWM’s Digital Humanities Lab), students will be introduced to issues related to preservation and access. It is somewhat clear from the video that the shaving kit is not excellent condition and repeated material engagement (while allowed, even encouraged) would certainly damage the physical integrity of the kit. With this in mind, students will identify an object in UWM’s holdings for which they wish to make a similar video, paying close attention to the ways in which they could capture the sensory experience/s of handling the object. In collaboration, students will film, edit, and ultimately share the videos, which will be intended for a wide, public audience.



- **Suggested modifications for grade/ability level**

For a lower-level course, students could complete this assignment in small groups. For upper-division or graduate-level courses, students should create videos on their own, and perhaps create and curate a small collection of videos based on a particular theme or idea.

## 6. Resources

- For more examples of other short videos that place objects as central to inquiry and observation, see videos created in conjunction with The Chipstone Foundation's annual Object Lab, including: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqFHWG29WNI>. Additionally, Wisconsin101 offers several videos that pair footage of objects with voice-over audio that provides contextualizing historical narratives; for example, see: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=16&v=iHWmR6OQG2I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=16&v=iHWmR6OQG2I). It should be noted that these examples differ from the video presented in this lesson, as well as the videos students are asked to make, in that the video presented here/asked of students will include no voice-over historical context or inquiry. Instead, audio should seek to capture another aspect of the sensory experience of encountering the object.
- For more information about the learning objectives that framed this assignment, consult *Measuring College Learning in History* (Lendol Calder and Tracy Steffes): <http://highered.ssrc.org/wp-content/uploads/MCL-in-History.pdf>
- **About the author:** this Experiment in Education was created by Krista Grensavitch (she/her/hers). She is a PhD candidate in History and holds an MA in Women's and Gender Studies, both from The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Her research is at the intersection of material culture theory, feminist pedagogy, and the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). The video was created by Krista Grensavitch in collaboration with Allain Daigle (he/him/his). He holds a PhD in English from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and produces his own video work through Tiny Owl Media.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

### EDUCATION

**Ph.D in History:** University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, August 2019

- Dissertation Title: “Thinking with Things: Reimagining the Object Lesson as a Feminist Pedagogical Device in the Humanities Classroom”
- Committee: Merry Wiesner-Hanks (chair), Sarah Anne Carter, Joe Austin, Christine Evans, Holly Hassel

**M.A. in Women’s and Gender Studies:** University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, May 2014

- Thesis Title: “Interrogating the Athenian *Lebes Gamikos*: Using Performativity to Understand the Prescription of Gendered Subjectivity”
- Committee: Merry Wiesner-Hanks, Bettina Arnold, Xin Huang

**B.A. in Psychology:** North Park University, Chicago, IL – May 2012

**B.A. in Classical Studies:** Carthage College, Kenosha, WI – May 2007

### TEACHING & MENTORING EXPERIENCE

**Lecturer:** University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI

- **Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies** (WGS 201), Fall 2018, Spring 2018, Fall 2017, Spring 2017, UWinteriM 2017, Fall 2016
- **Independent Study: Feminist Research Methods** (WGS 699), Spring 2018
- **Thinking with Things: History and Material Culture** (HIST 192), Spring 2018
- **History of Women in American Society** (HIST 243), Fall 2016

**Adjunct Faculty:** Carthage College, Kenosha, WI

- **Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies** (WMG 1100), Fall 2015

**Graduate Teaching Assistant:** University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI

- **American Indians of the Western Great Lakes** (AIS 203, Susan Wade and Margaret Noodin), Spring 2015
- **World History to 1500** (HIST 131, Merry Wiesner-Hanks), Fall 2014
- **Introduction to Women’s Studies** (WMNS 200, Instructor of Record), Spring 2013, Fall 2013, Spring 2014

**Mentor to Graduate Teaching Assistants:** University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Women’s & Gender Studies, August 2016 - May 2017; January 2018 - May 2018

## RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE

**Curriculum Consultant:** *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee* Project, University of Milwaukee-Wisconsin

Contract: January 2019 – May 2019

**LGBTQ+ Inclusivity Workshop Developer and Facilitator:** University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Workshop Sessions Held: Fall 2017, Spring 2018, Summer 2018

The LGBTQ+ Inclusivity Workshop at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) is a collaborative campus initiative that addresses issues of inclusivity within teaching and learning practices and seeks to foster a culture of inclusivity on UWM's campus.

**Teaching, Learning, and Technology Assistant:** Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Contract: August 1, 2017 - January 15, 2018; June 2018 - August 2018

**Photo Editor:** *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee* Project, June 2017 - August 2017

**Graduate Research Assistant:** *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee* Project, August 2015 - August 2016

**Fact-Checker:** *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee* Project, June 2015 - August 2015

**Editorial Assistant:** Cambridge University Press, May 2014-July 2014

## GRANTS & AWARDS

**David and Diane Buck Dissertation Fellowship,** Department of History, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Awarded for 2018-2019 Academic Year

**R1 Distinguished Dissertation Fellowship,** Graduate School, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Awarded for 2018-2019 Academic Year

**Tennessen Fellowship:** Center for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Awarded for 2018-2019 Academic Year

**Arts & Humanities Research Travel Award:** The Office of Research, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Awarded Fall 2018

**Graduate Student Travel Award:** University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Graduate School, Awarded Fall 2018

**First Year Research Experience Instructor,** University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
Course: Thinking with Things: History and Material Culture (HIST 192, taught Spring 2018);

teaching a First-Year Research Experience Seminars (FYRE) is a competitive process funded and facilitated by UWM's Office of Undergraduate Research

### **Chipstone Foundation Grant for Teaching and Learning Video Resource Production,**

Awarded 2016 & 2018

Grants funded costs associated with the final project for History of Women in American Society (HIST 243, taught Fall 2016) and the production and publication of *Creating the Supper Club* and *Memory Keepers*.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

"Memory Keepers." *YouTube*, uploaded by the Chipstone Foundation, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dWmPOFxo9U&t=27s>.

"Kadınlar ve Yemek İşleri Üzerinden Failliğin Üretimi [Gender, Food, and Culture]." *Berber az mi tuz Ekmek Yedik [How Many Meals Have We Shared Together]*, Armine Avetisyan and Ihsan Karayazi, eds. Kars: Şehir ve Kültür Arastirmalari Dernegi, 2017.

"Creating the Supper Club: Interpreting Judy Chicago's The Dinner Party." *YouTube*, uploaded by the Chipstone Foundation, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_eV5G2R6\\_mI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_eV5G2R6_mI).  
*Encyclopedia of Milwaukee* entries: "Gender;" "Holy Hill;" "Inner Core;" "Wayne, Town of;" "Trenton, Town of;" "Polk, Town of;" "Newburg;" "Kewaskum, Town of;" "Jackson, Village of;" "Farmington, Town of;" "Erin, Town of;" "Addison, Town of;" "Washington County;" entries 250-3000 words each. (in press)

"Queering the Study of Classical Antiquity," *Feminist Spaces* 2.1 (2016): 70-76.

## **SELECTED CONFERENCE & INVITED PRESENTATIONS**

"Digital Humanities Teaching Fellows Panel." University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI, March 2019. (Invited Panel Moderator)

"#MeToo and Where We Are Today." St. John's on The Lake, Milwaukee, WI, January 2019. (Invited Presentation)

"Impact Beyond the Classroom: Creating Teaching and Learning Video Resources." *UWM Teaching and Learning Symposium*. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI, January 2019.

"An Innovative Women's and Gender Studies Curriculum: Objects Facilitating a Culture of Learning." *ISSOTL 18 Conference*. The University of Bergen, Bergen, Sweden, October 2018.

“Making History Relevant to the Present: Teaching for the 21st Century.” *Annual Meeting of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association 2018*. Santa Clara, California, August 2018.

“Primary Source Activities: Engaging with SoTL in History to Achieve Learning Outcomes in a World History Classroom.” *World History Association Conference 2018*. Milwaukee, Wisconsin, June 2018. (Workshop)

“Reimagining Judy Chicago’s *The Dinner Party*: Objects and Archives in the History Classroom.” *2018 OPID Spring Conference on Teaching and Learning*. Madison, Wisconsin, April 2018.

“Toward an Inclusive Classroom and Curriculum: Teaching with Language that Respects All Identities.” *UWM Teaching and Learning Symposium*. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI, January 2018. (Invited Presentation)

“The Impact of the Unknowable: Objects and Archives in a Women’s History Classroom.” *ISSOTL17 Conference*. The University of Calgary and Mount Royal University, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, October 2017.

“Mentoring Relationships in Women's and Gender Studies: Empowering Learners and Sustaining a Program.” *4W Summit on Women, Gender, and Well-being*. University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI, April 2017. (Panel Organizer)

“Creative Materiality in the Classroom: A Feminist and Queer Pedagogical Approach.” *2016 Summit on Women, Gender, and Well-Being*. University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI, April 2016.

“Gender Scripts on the *Lebes Gamikos* of Ancient Athens.” *National Women’s Studies Association*. Milwaukee, WI, November 2015.

## **PROFESSIONAL & UNIVERSITY SERVICE**

**Advisory Board Member:** Digital Humanities Lab, Golda Meir Library, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

**Executive Committee Member:** Midwest World History Association

Planning Committee Member: *Midwest World History Association Conference 2018*

**Organizing Committee Member:** *Attending to Early Modern Women 2018: Action and Agency*

**Facilitator:** University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Common Read Experience, September 2017

**Graduate Student Representative:** National Endowment for the Humanities Next Generation Challenge Planning Grant

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, July 2016-August 2017  
Grant title: “Transforming the Culture of Post-Doctoral Humanities Careers”  
Faculty Education Committee Member: managed a project to develop and distribute a Faculty Survey using Qualtrics

**Program Committee Member:** Women’s & Gender Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, August 2016-July 2017

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

LIFT Training, Trans 2.0: LGBT Resource Center, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, November 2017.

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program), Completed July 2017 Curriculum Group: IRB-Social and Behavioral Researchers

Online and Blended Teaching Certificate: Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, August 2015